This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

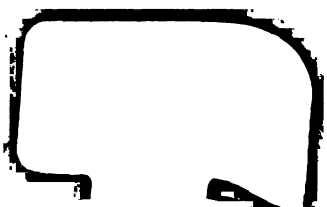
+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`



Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE WHOLE

WORKS

OF THE

REV. MR. JOHN FLAVEL.

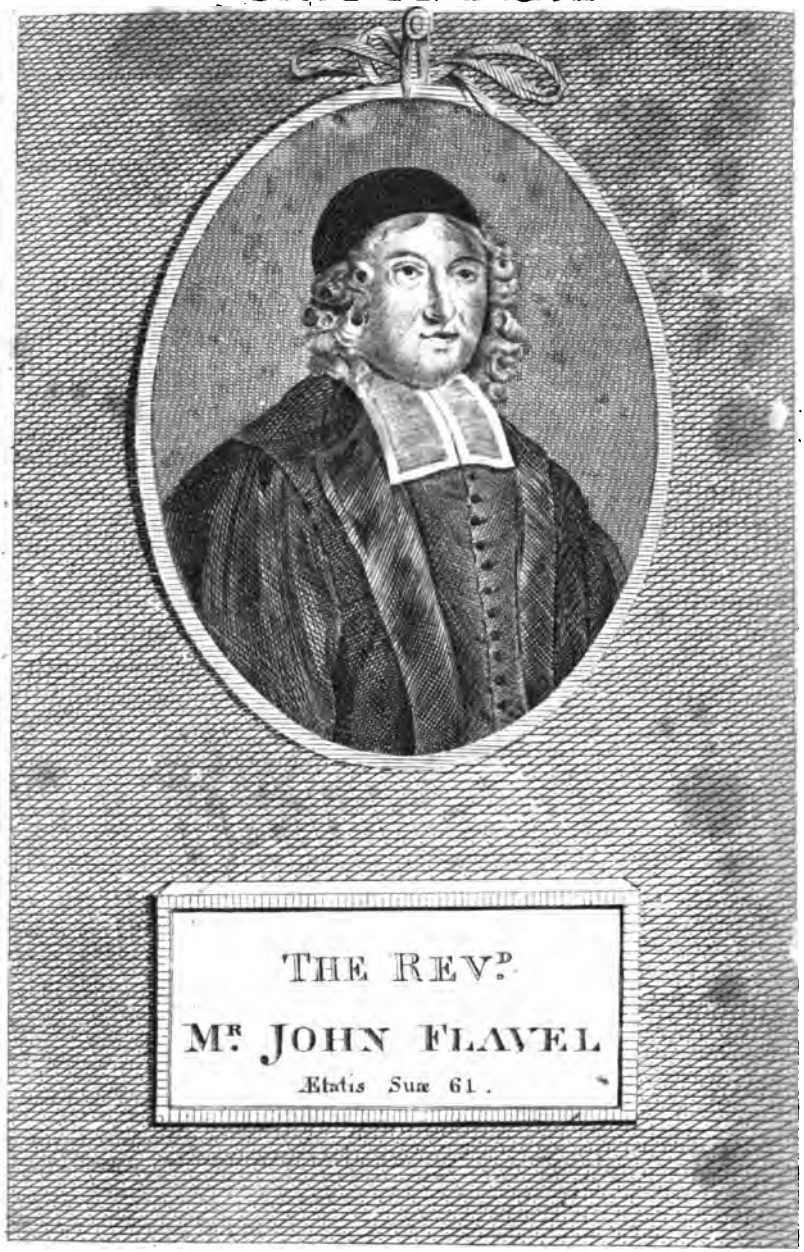
VOL. I.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

FRONTISPIECE



THE REVP.
MR JOHN FLAVEL
Ætatis Suæ 61.

Digitized by Google

THE WHOLE

WORKS

OF THE

REV. MR. JOHN FLAVEL,

Late Minister of the Gospel at Dartmouth, Devon.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

AN ALPHABETICAL TABLE

OF THE PRINCIPAL MATTERS CONTAINED IN THE WHOLE WORKS.

The Latin, Greek, and Hebrew Notes and Quotations, are now first translated in this Edition.

IN SIX VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. MATHEWS, NO 18, STRAND.

1799.

Digitized by Google

NEW YORK
PUBLIC
LIBRARY

Digitized by Google

THE

LIFE

OF THE LATE

REV. MR. JOHN FLAVEL,

MINISTER OF DARTMOUTH.

THOSE of the name of *Flavel* derive their pedigree from one who was the third great officer that came over with *William the Conqueror*; but this worthy Divine was far from that weakneſs and vanity to boaſt of any thing of that nature, being of the poet's mind, who ſaid,

Et genus, et proavos, et quae non fecimus ipſi,
Vix ea noſtra voco———

His father was Mr Richard Flavel, a painful and eminent miniſter. He was firſt miniſter at Broomſgrove, in Worceſterſhire, then at Haſler, and removed from thence to Willerſey, in Glouceſterſhire, where he continued to 1660, whence he was outed upon the reſtoration of King Charles II. becauſe it was a ſequeſtered living, and the incumbent then alive: this did not ſo much affect Mr Flavel, as that he wanted a fixed place for the exerciſe of his paſtoral function. He was a perſon of ſuch extraordinary piety, that thoſe who converſed with him, ſaid, They never heard one vain word drop from his mouth. A little before the turning out of the Nonconformiſt miniſters, being near Totneſs, in Devon, he preached from Hoſea vii. 6. *The days of viſitation are come, the days of recompence are come, Iſrael ſhall know it.* His application was ſo cloſe, that it offended ſome people, and occaſioned his being carried before ſome Juſtices of the Peace; but they could not reach him, ſo that he was diſcharged. He afterwards quitted that country, and his ſon's houſe, which was his retiring place, and came to London, where he continued in a faithful and acceptable diſcharge of his office, till the time of the dreadful plague in 1665, that he was taken and impriſoned in the manner following. He was at Mr Blake's houſe in Covent-Garden, where ſome people had met privately for worſhip: whilſt he was at prayer, a party of ſoldiers brake in upon them, with their ſwords drawn

Digitized by Google

drawn and demanded their preacher, threatening ſome, and flattering others to diſcover him, but in vain. Some of the company threw a coloured cloak over him, and in this diſguiſe he was, together with his hearers, carried to Whitehall; the women were diſmiſſed, but the men were detained and forced to ly all that night upon the bare floor; and, becauſe they would not pay five pounds each, were ſent to Newgate, where the peſtilence raged moſt violently, as in other places of the city. Here Mr Flavel and his wife were ſhut up, and ſeized with the ſickneſs: they were bailed out, but died of the contagion; of which their ſon John had a divine monition given him by a dream, as we ſhall obſerve in its proper place. Mr Richard Flavel left two ſons behind him, both miniſters of the goſpel, viz. John and Phineas.

John the eldeſt was born in Worceſterſhire. It was obſervable, that whilſt his mother lay in with him, a nightingale made her neſt in the out-ſide of the chamber-window, where ſhe uſed to ſing moſt ſweetly. He was religiouſly educated by his father, and having profited well at the grammar ſchools, was ſent early to Oxford, and ſettled a commoner in Univerſity College. He plied his ſtudies hard, and exceeded many of his cotemporaries in univerſity learning.

Soon after his commencing batchelor of arts, Mr Walplate, the miniſter of Diptford, in the county of Devon, was rendered uncapable of performing his office by reaſon of his age and infirmity, and ſent to Oxford for an aſſiſtant; Mr Flavel, though but young, was recommended to him as a perſon duly qualified, and was accordingly ſettled there by the ſtanding committee of Devon, April 27, 1650, to preach as a probationer and aſſiſtant to Mr Walplate.

Mr Flavel conſidering the weight of his charge, applied himſelf to the work of his calling with great diligence; and being aſſiduous in reading, meditation and prayer, he increaſed in miniſterial knowledge daily, (for he found himſelf that he came raw enough in that reſpect from the univerſity) ſo that he attained to an high degree of eminency and reputation for his uſeful labours in the church.

About ſix months after his ſettling at Diptford, he heard of an ordination to be at Saliſbury, and therefore went thither with his teſtimonials, and offered himſelf to be examined and ordained by the preſbytery there: they appointed him a text, upon which he preached to their general ſatisfaction; and having afterwards examined him as to his learning, *&c.* they ſet him apart to the work of the miniſtry, with prayer and impoſition of hands, on the 17th day of October, 1650.

Mr Flavel being thus ordained, returned to Diptford, and after Mr Walplate's death ſucceeded in the rectory. To avoid all incumbrances from the world, and avocations from his ſtudies and miniſterial work, he choſe a perſon of worth and reputation in the pariſh (of whom he had a good aſſurance that he would be faithful to himſelf,

Digitized by Google

felf, and kind to his parishioners) and let him the whole tithes much below the real value, which was very pleasing to his people. By this means he was the better able to deal with them in private, since the hire of his labours was no way a hindrance to the success of them.

Whilst he was at Diptford he married one Mrs Jane Randal, a pious gentlewoman, of a good family, who died in travail of her first child without being delivered. His year of mourning being expired, his acquaintance and intimate friends advised him to marry a second time, wherein he was again very happy. *Elizabeth Morries.* Sometime after this second marriage, the people of Dartmouth (a great and noted sea-port in the county of Devon, formerly under the charge of the Reverend Mr Anthony Hartford, deceased) unanimously chose Mr Flavel to succeed him. They urged him to accept their call, (1.) Because there were exceptions made against all the other candidates, but none against him. (2.) Because, being acceptable to the whole town, he was the more like to be an instrument of healing the breaches among the good people there. (3.) Because Dartmouth, being a considerable and populous town, required an able and eminent minister, which was not so necessary for a country-parish, that might besides be more easily supplied with another pastor than Dartmouth.

That which made them more pressing and earnest with Mr Flavel, was this; at a provincial synod in that county, Mr Flavel, though but a young man, was voted into the chair as moderator, where he opened the assembly with a most devout and pertinent prayer; he examined the candidates who offered themselves to their trials for the ministry with great learning, stated the cases and questions proposed to them with much acuteness and judgment, and in the whole demeaned himself with that gravity, piety, and seriousness, during his presidency, that all the ministers of the assembly admired and loved him. The Reverend Mr Hartford, his predecessor at Dartmouth, took particular notice of him, from that time forward contracted a strict friendship with him, and spoke of him among the magistrates and people of Dartmouth, as an extraordinary person, who was like to be a great light in the church. This, with their having several times heard him preach, occasioned their importunity with Mr Flavel to come and be their minister; upon which having spread his case before the Lord, and submitted to the decision of his neighbouring ministers, he was prevailed upon to remove to Dartmouth, to his great loss in temporals, the rectory of Diptford being a much greater benefice.

Mr Flavel being settled at Dartmouth by the election of people, and an order from Whitehall by the commissioners for approbation of public preachers, of the 10th of December, 1656, he was associated with Mr Allein Geere, a very worthy, but sickly, man. The ministerial work was thus divided betwixt them; Mr Flavel was

Digitized by Google to

to preach on the Lord's-day at Town-ſtall, the mother-church ſtanding upon a hill without the town; and every fortnight in his turn at the Wedneſday's Lecture in Dartmouth. Here God crowned his labours with many converſions. One of his judicious hearers expreſſed himſelf thus concerning him; "I could ſay much, though "not enough, of the excellency of his preaching; of his ſeaſonable, "ſuitable and ſpiritual matter; of his plain expoſitions of ſcripture, "his taking method, his genuine and natural deductions, his con-"vincing arguments, his clear and powerful demonſtrations, his "heart-ſearching applications, and his comfortable ſupports to thoſe "that were afflicted in conſcience. In ſhort, that perſon muſt have "a very ſoft head, or a very hard heart, or both, that could ſit "under his miniſtry unaffected."

By his unwearied application to ſtudy, he had acquired a great ſtock both of divine and human learning. He was maſter of the controverſies betwixt the Jews and Chriſtians, Papiſts and Proteſtants, Lutherans and Calviniſts, and betwixt the Orthodox, and the Arminians and Socinians: he was likewiſe well read in the Controverſies about Church-diſcipline, Infant-Baptiſm, and Antinomianiſm. He was well acquainted with the School-divinity, and drew up a judicious and ingenious ſcheme of the whole body of that Theology in good Latin, which he preſented to a perſon of quality, but it was never printed. He had one way of improving his knowledge, which is very proper for young divines; whatever remarkable paſſage he heard in private conference, if he was familiar with the relator, he would deſire him to repeat it again, and inſert it into his Averſaria: by theſe methods he acquired a vaſt ſtock of proper materials for his popular ſermons in the pulpit, and his more elaborate works for the preſs.

He had an excellent gift of prayer, and was never at a loſs in all his various occaſions for ſuitable matter and words; and, which was the moſt remarkable of all, he always brought with him a broken heart and moving affections: his tongue and ſpirit were touched with a live coal from the altar, and he was evidently aſſiſted by the holy Spirit of grace and ſupplication in that divine ordinance. Thoſe who lived in his family, ſay, that he was always full and copious in prayer, ſeemed conſtantly to exceed himſelf, and rarely made uſe twice of the ſame expreſſions.

When the act of uniformity turned him out with the reſt of his nonconforming brethren, he did not thereupon quit his relation to his church, he thought the ſouls of his flock to be more precious than to be ſo tamely neglected: he took all opportunities of miniſtring the word and ſacraments to them in private meetings, and joined with other miniſters in ſolemn days of faſting and humiliation, to pray that God would once more reſtore the ark of his covenant unto his afflicted Iſrael. About four months after that fatal Bartholomew

Digitized by Google

lomew day, his reverend colleague, Mr Allein Geere, died; ſo that the whole care of the flock devolved upon Mr Flavel, which, though a heavy and preſſing burden, he undertook very cheerfully.

Upon the execution of the Oxford act, which baniſhed all nonconformiſt miniſters five miles from any towns which ſent members to parliament, he was forced to leave Dartmouth, to the great ſorrow of his people, who followed him out of town; and at Townſtall church-yard they took ſuch a mournful farewel of one another, as the place might very well have been called Bochim. He removed to Slapton, a pariſh five miles from Dartmouth, or any other corporation, which put him out of the legal reach of his adverſaries. Here he met with ſignal inſtances of God's fatherly care and protection, and preached twice every Lord's-day to ſuch as durſt adventure to hear him, which many of his own people and others did, notwithſtanding the rigour and ſeverity of the act againſt conventicles. He many times ſlipped privately into Dartmouth, where by preaching and converſation he edified his flock, to the great refreſhment of his own ſoul and theirs, though with very much danger, becauſe of his watchful adverſaries, who conſtantly laid wait for him, ſo that he could not make any long ſtay in the town.

In thoſe times Mr Flavel being at Exeter, was invited to preach by many good people of that city, who for ſafety choſe a wood about three miles from the city to be the place of their aſſembly, where they were broke up by their enemies by that time the ſermon was well begun. Mr Flavel, by the care of the people, made his eſcape through the middle of his enraging enemies; and though many of his hearers were taken, carried before Juſtice Tuckfield, and fined; yet the reſt, being nothing diſcouraged, re-aſſembled, and carrying Mr Flavel, to another wood, he preached to them without any diſturbance; and, after he had concluded, rode to a gentleman's houſe near the wood, who, though an abſolute ſtranger to Mr Flavel, entertained him with great civility that night, and next day he returned to Exeter in ſafety. Amongſt thoſe taken at this time, there was a Tanner who had a numerous family, and but a ſmall ſtock; he was fined notwithſtanding in forty pounds; at which he was nothing diſcouraged, but told a friend, who aſked him how he bore up under his loſs, *That he took the ſpoiling of his goods joyfully, for the ſake of his Lord Jeſus, for whom his life and all that he had was too little.*

As ſoon as the Nonconformiſts had any reſpite from their trouble, Mr Flavel laid hold of the opportunity, and returned to Dartmouth, where, during the firſt indulgence granted by King Charles II. he kept open doors, and preached freely to all that would come and hear him; and when that liberty was revoked, he made it his buſineſs notwithſtanding to preach in ſeaſon and out of ſeaſon, and ſeldom miſſed of an opportunity of preaching on the Lord's-day. During this time, God was pleaſed to deprive him of his ſecond wife, which

Digitized by Google

which was a great affliction, she having been a help-meet for him; and such an one he stood much in need of, as being a man of an infirm and weak constitution, who laboured under many infirmities. In convenient time he married a third wife, Mrs Ann Downe, daughter of Mr Thomas Downe, minister of Exeter, who lived very happily with him eleven years, and left him two sons, who are youths of great hopes.

The persecution against the Nonconformists being renewed, Mr Flavel found it unsafe to stay at Dartmouth, and therefore resolved to go to London, where he hoped to be in less danger, and to have more liberty to exercise his function. The night before he embarked for that end, he had the following premonition by a dream; he thought he was on board the ship, and that a storm arose which exceedingly terrified the passengers; during their consternation there sat writing at the table a person of admirable sagacity and gravity, who had a child in a cradle by him that was very froward; he thought he saw the father take up a little whip, and give the child a lash, saying, *Child be quiet, I will discipline, but not hurt thee.* Upon this Mr Flavel awaked, and musing on his dream, he concluded, that he should meet with some trouble in his passage: his friends being at dinner with him, assured him of a pleasant passage, because the wind and weather were very fair; Mr Flavel replied, *That he was not of their mind, but expected much trouble because of his dream;* adding, *that when he had such representations made to him in his sleep, they seldom or never failed.*

Accordingly, when they were advanced within five leagues of Portland in their voyage, they were overtaken by a dreadful tempest, insomuch that, betwixt one and two in the morning, the master and seamen concluded, that, unless God changed the wind, there was no hope of life; it was impossible for them to weather Portland, so that they must of necessity be wrecked on the rocks or on the shore. Upon this Mr Flavel called all the hands that could be spared into the cabin to prayer; but the violence of the tempest was such, that they could not prevent themselves from being thrown from the one side unto the other as the ship was tossed; and not only so, but mighty seas brake in upon them, as if they would have drowned them in the very cabin. Mr Flavel in this danger took hold of the two pillars of the cabin bed, and calling upon God, begged mercy for himself and the rest in the ship. Amongst other arguments in prayer, he made use of this, that if he and his company perished in that storm, the name of God would be blasphemed, the enemies of religion would say, that though he escaped their hands on shore, yet divine vengeance had overtaken him at sea. In the midst of prayer his faith and hope were raised, insomuch that he expected a gracious answer; so that, committing himself and his company to the mercy of God, he concluded the duty. No sooner was prayer ended, but one came down from the deck, crying, *Deliverance! De-*

Digitized by Google

Deliverance! God is a God hearing prayer! In a moment the wind is come fair west! And so sailing before it, they were brought safely to London. Mr Flavel found many of his old friends there; and God raised him new ones, with abundance of work, and extraordinary encouragement in it. During his stay in London, he married his fourth wife, a widow gentlewoman, (daughter to Mr George Jefferies, formerly minister of King's-Bridge) but now his sorrowful relict.

Mr Flavel, while he was in London, narrowly escaped being taken, with the reverend Mr Jenkins, at Mr Fox's in Moorfields, where they were keeping a day of fasting and prayer. He was so near, that he heard the insolence of the officers and soldiers to Mr Jenkins when they had taken him; and observed it in his diary, that Mr Jenkins might have escaped as well as himself, had it not been for a piece of vanity in a lady, whose long train hindered his going down stairs, Mr Jenkins, out of his too great civility having let her pass before him.

Mr Flavel after this, returned to Dartmouth, where with his family and dear people he blessed God for his mercies towards him. He was in a little time after confined close prisoner to his house, where many of his dear flock stole in over night, or betimes on the Lord's-day in the morning, to enjoy the benefit of his labours, and spend the sabbath in hearing, praying, singing of psalms, and holy discourses.

Mr Jenkins, abovementioned, dying in prison, his people gave Mr Flavel a call to the pastoral office among them, and Mr Reeves's people did the like. Mr Flavel communicated these calls unto his flock, and kept a day of prayer with them to beg direction of God in this important affair; he was graciously pleased to answer them by fixing Mr Flavel's resolution to stay with his flock at Dartmouth. Many arguments were made use of to persuade him to come to London, as, that since he was turned out by the act of uniformity, he had had but very little maintenance from his church; that those at London were rich and numerous congregations; that he had a family and children to provide for; and that the city was a theatre of honour and reputation. But none of these things could prevail with him to leave his poor people at Dartmouth.

In 1687, when it pleased God so to over-rule affairs, that King James II. thought it his interest to dispense with the penal laws against them, Mr Flavel, who had formerly been confined to a corner, shone brightly, as a flaming beacon upon the top of an hill. His affectionate people prepared a large place for him, where God blessed his labours to the conviction of many people, by his sermons on Rev. iii. 20. *Behold I stand at the door and knock.* This encouraged him to print those sermons, under the title of England's Duty, *&c.* hoping that it might do good abroad, as well as in his own congregation. He made a vow to the Lord under his confinement, that if he should

Digitized by Google

be once more entrusted with public liberty, he would improve it to the advantage of the gospel; this he performed in a most conscientious manner, preached twice every Lord's-day, and lectured every Wednesday, in which he went over most of the 3d chapter of St John's gospel, shewing the indispensible necessity of regeneration. He preached likewise every Thursday before the sacrament, and then after examination admitted communicants. He had no assistance on sacrament-days, so that he was many times almost spent before he distributed the elements. When the duty of the day was over, he would often complain of a sore breast, an aking head, and a pained back; yet he would be early at study again next Monday. He allowed himself very little recreation, accounting time a precious jewel that ought to be improved at any rate.

He was not only a zealous preacher in the pulpit, but a sincere Christian in his closet, frequent in self-examination, as well as in pressing it upon others; being afraid, lest while he preached to others, he himself should be a cast-away. To prove this, I shall transcribe what follows from his own diary.

"To make sure of eternal life, (said he) is the great business "which the sons of death have to do in this world. Whether a "man consider the immortality of his own soul, the ineffable joys "and glory of heaven, the extreme and endless torments of hell, "the inconceivable sweetness of peace of conscience, or the misery "of being subject to the terrors thereof; all these put a necessity, "a solemnity, a glory upon this work. But, Oh! the difficulties "and dangers attending it! How many, and how great are these? "What judgment, faithfulness, resolution, and watchfulness doth "it require? Such is the deceitfulness, darkness, and inconstancy of "our hearts, and such the malice, policy and diligence of Satan to "manage and improve it, that he who attempts this work had need "both to watch his seasons for it, and frequently look up to God for "his guidance and illumination, and to spend many sad and serious "thoughts before he adventure upon a determination and conclusion "of the state of his soul.

"To the end therefore that this most important work may not "miscarry in my hands, I have collected, with all the care I can, "the best and soundest characters I can find in the writings of our "modern divines, taken out of the scripture, and by their labours "illustrated and prepared for use, that I might make a right appli-"cation of them.

"1. I have earnestly sought the Lord for the assistance of his "Spirit, which can only manifest my own heart unto me, and shew "me the true state thereof, which is that thing my soul doth most "earnestly desire to know; and I hope the Lord will answer my de-"sire therein, according to his promises, Luke xi. 13. John xiv. 26.

"2. I have endeavoured to cast out and lay aside self-love, lest my

Digitized by Google

" my heart being prepoſſeſſed therewith, my judgment ſhould be " perverted, and become partial in paſſing ſentence on my eſtate. " I have, in ſome meaſure, brought my heart to be willing to judge " and condemn myſelf for an hypocrite, if ſuch I ſhall be found on " trial, as to approve myſelf for ſincere and upright. Yea, I would " have it ſo far from being grievous to me ſo to do, that if I have " been all this while miſtaken and deceived, I ſhall rejoice and bleſs " the Lord with my ſoul, that now at laſt it may be diſcovered to me, " and I may be ſet right, though I lay the foundation new again. " This I have laboured to bring my heart to, knowing that thou- " ſands have daſhed and ſplit to pieces upon this rock. And indeed " he that will own the perſon of a judge, muſt put off the perſon of a " friend.

" 3. It hath been my endeavour to keep upon my heart a deep " ſenſe of that great judgment-day throughout this work; as know- " ing by experience what a potent influence this hath on the con- " ſcience, to make it deliberate, ſerious and faithful in its work; and " therefore I have demanded of my own conſcience, before the reſo- " lution of each queſtion, O my conſcience, deal faithfully with me " in this particular, and ſay no more to me than thou wilt own and " ſtand to in the great day, when the counſels of all hearts ſhall be " made manifeſt.

" 4. Having ſeriouſly weighed each mark, and conſidered where- " in the weight and ſubſtance of it lieth, I have gone to the Lord in " prayer for his aſſiſtance, ere I have drawn up the anſwer of my " conſcience; and as my heart hath been perſuaded therein, ſo have " I determined and reſolved: what hath been clear to my experience, " I have ſo ſet down; and what hath been dubious, I have here left " it ſo.

" 5. I have made choice of the fitteſt ſeaſons I had for this work, " and ſet to it when I have found my heart in the moſt quiet and " ſerious frame. For as he that would ſee his face in a glaſs, muſt " be fixt, not in motion, or in water, muſt make no commotion in " it; ſo it is in this caſe.

" 6. *Laſtly*, To the end I may be ſucceſsful in this work, I have " laboured all along carefully to diſtinguiſh betwixt ſuch ſins as are " grounds of doubting, and ſuch as are only grounds of humiliation; " knowing that not every evil is a ground of doubting, though all, " even the ſmalleſt infirmities, adminiſter matter of humiliation; and " thus I have deſired to enterprize this great buſineſs. O Lord, " aſſiſt thy ſervant, that he may not miſtake herein; but, if his con- " ſcience do now condemn him, he may lay a better foundation whilſt " he hath time; and if it ſhall now acquit him, he may alſo have " boldneſs in the day of judgment."

Theſe things being previouſly diſpatched, he tried himſelf by the ſcripture marks of ſincerity and regeneration; by this means he attained

Digitized by Google

tained to a well-grounded assurance, the ravishing comforts of which were many times shed abroad in his soul; this made him a powerful and successful preacher, as one who spoke from his own heart to those of others. He preached what he felt, what he had handled, what he had seen and tasted of the word of life, and they felt it also.

We may guess what a sweet and blessed intercourse he had with heaven, from that history we meet with in his *Pneumatologia*, p. 323. which I refer to, and likewise of that revelation he had of his father and mother's death, p. 339. He was a mighty wrestler with God in secret prayer, and particularly begged of him to crown his sermons, printed books and private discourses, with the conversion of poor sinners, a work which his heart was much set upon. It pleased God to answer him by many instances, of which the two that follow deserve peculiar notice.

In 1673, there came into Dartmouth port a ship of Pool, in her return from Virginia; the Surgeon of this ship, a lusty young man of 23 years of age, fell into a deep melancholy, which the Devil improved to make him murder himself. This he attempted on the Lord's-day, early in the morning, when he was in bed with his brother; he first cut his own throat with a knife he had prepared on purpose, and leaping out of the bed, thrust it likewise into his stomach, and so lay wallowing in his own blood, till his brother awaked and cried for help. A Physician and Surgeon were brought, who concluded the wound in his throat mortal; they stitched it up however, and applied a plaister, but without hopes of cure, because he already breathed through the wound, and his voice was become inarticulate. Mr Flavel came to visit him in this condition, and apprehending him to be within a few minutes of eternity, laboured to prepare him for it; he asked him his own apprehensions of his condition, and the young man answered, that he hoped in God for eternal life. Mr Flavel replied, that he feared his hopes were ill-grounded: the scripture tells us, that *no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him*: self-murder was the grossest of all murder, *&c.* Mr Flavel insisted so much on the aggravations of the crime, that the young man's conscience began to fail, his heart began to melt, and then he broke out into tears, bewailing his sin and misery, and asked Mr Flavel, If there might yet be any hope for him? he told him there might; and finding him altogether unacquainted with the nature of faith and repentance, he opened them to him. The poor man sucked in this doctrine greedily, prayed with great vehemence to God, that he would work them on his soul, and intreated Mr Flavel to pray with him, and for him, that he might be, though late, a sincere gospel-penitent, and sound believer. Mr Flavel prayed with him accordingly, and it pleased God exceedingly to melt the young man's heart, during the performance of that duty. He was very loth to part with Mr Flavel, but the duty of the day obliging him to be gone,

Digitized by Google

gone, in a few words he ſummed up thoſe counſels that he thought moſt neceſſary, and ſo took his farewel of him, never expecting to ſee him any more in this world. But it pleaſed God to order it otherwiſe; the young man continued alive contrary to all expectation, panted earneſtly after the Lord Jeſus, and no diſcourſe was pleaſing to him, but that of Chriſt and faith. In this frame Mr Flavel found him in the evening; he rejoiced greatly when he ſaw him come again, intreated him to continue his diſcourſe upon thoſe ſubjects, and told him, Sir, the Lord hath given me repentance for this and for all my other ſins; I ſee the evil of them now, ſo as I never ſaw them before! O I loathe myſelf! I do alſo believe, Lord, help my unbelief. I am heartily willing to take Chriſt upon his own terms; but one thing troubles me, I doubt this bloody ſin will not be pardoned. Will Jeſus Chriſt, ſaid he, apply his blood to one, who has ſhed his own blood? Mr Flavel told him, that the Lord Jeſus ſhed his blood for them who with wicked hands had ſhed his own blood, which was a greater ſin than the ſhedding of his; to which the wounded man replied, I will caſt myſelf upon Chriſt, let him do what he will. In this condition Mr Flavel left him that night.

Next morning his wounds were to be opened, and the Surgeon's opinion was, that he would immediately expire: Mr Flavel was again requeſted to give him a viſit, which he did, found him in a very ſerious frame, and prayed with him. The wound in his ſtomach was afterwards opened, when the ventricle was ſo much ſwoln, that it came out at the orifice of the wound, and lay like a lived, diſcoloured tripe upon his body, and was alſo cut through; every one thought it impoſſible for him to live; however, the Surgeon enlarged the orifice of the wound, fomented it, and wrought the ventricle again into his body, and, ſtitching up the wound, left his patient to the diſpoſal of providence.

It pleaſed God that he was cured of thoſe dangerous wounds in his body; and, upon ſolid grounds of a rational charity, there was ground to believe that he was alſo cured of that more dangerous wound which ſin had made in his ſoul. Mr Flavel ſpent many hours with him during his ſickneſs; and when the Surgeon returned to Pool, after his recovery, Mr Samuel Hardy, that worthy miniſter there, thanked Mr Flavel in a letter, for the great pains he had taken with that young man, and congratulated his ſucceſs, aſſuring him, that if ever a great and thorough work was wrought, it was upon that man.

The ſecond inſtance is this: Mr Flavel being in London in 1673, his old bookſeller, Mr Boulter, gave him this following relation, viz. That ſome time before, there came into his ſhop a ſparkiſh gentleman to enquire for ſome play-books; Mr Boulter told him he had none, but ſhewed him Mr Flavel's little treatiſe of *Keeping the Heart*, intreated him to read it, and aſſured him it would do him more good than

Digitized by Google

them play-books. The gentleman read the title, and glancing upon several pages here and there, broke out into these and such other expressions, What a damnable Fanatic was he who made this book? Mr Boulter begged of him to buy and read it, and told him he had no cause to censure it so bitterly; at last he bought it, but told him he would not read it. What will you do with it then, said Mr Boulter? I will tear and burn it, said he, and send it to the Devil. Mr Boulter told him, that he should not have it. Upon this the gentleman promised to read it; and Mr Boulter told him, if he disliked it upon reading, he would return him his money. About a month after, the gentleman came to the shop again in a very modest habit, and, with a serious countenance, bespoke Mr Boulter thus; Sir, I most heartily thank you for putting this book into my hands; I bless God that moved you to do it, it hath saved my soul; blessed be God that ever I came into your shop. And then he bought a hundred more of those books of him, and told him he would give them to the poor who could not buy them, and so left him, praising and admiring the goodness of God. Thus it pleased God to bless the sermons, discourses and writings of Mr Flavel.

He never delighted in controversies, but was obliged, contrary to his inclination, to write against Mr Cary, the principal Anabaptist in Dartmouth, with whom, however, he maintained a friendly and Christian correspondence. When he wrote his *Planelogia*, or, *Blow at the Root*, he declared to his friends, that though those studies were very necessary, he took no pleasure in them, but had rather be employed in practical divinity. When he composed his *Reasonableness of Personal Reformation*, he told an intimate acquaintance of his, that he seldom had a vain thought to interrupt him, which made him hope it would do the more good in the world. He purposed to have enlarged his book of *Sacramental Meditations*, and had most judiciously stated and handled several cases of conscience on that occasion, which he designed to have inserted in the next edition, but lived not to finish them for the press.

Many times, when he preached abroad, he has had letters sent him from unknown persons, informing him how God had blessed his ministry to their souls, and converted them from being bitter enemies to religion. This encouraged him when he rode abroad, not only to accept of invitations to preach, but many times to offer his labours unto those that would be pleased to hear him; though for this he had no occasion where he was known, the people being generally importunate with him. One day after a long and hard journey, an intimate friend of his, out of a tender regard to him, pressed him with cogent arguments to forbear preaching at that season, but could not prevail with him; his bowels of compassion to needy and perishing souls made him overlook all considerations of himself: he preached

an

Digitized by Google

an excellent ſermon, by which there was one converted, as he declared himſelf afterwards upon his admiſſion to the Lord's table.

The laſt ſermon that he preached to his people at Dartmouth, was on a public day of faſting and humiliation; in the cloſe of which he was enlarged in ſuch an extraordinary manner, when offering up praiſes to God for mercies received, that he ſeemed to be in an extaſy. This happened about a week before his death, and may juſtly be accounted a foretaſte of thoſe heavenly raptures that he now enjoys amongſt the bleſſed ſpirits above.

The laſt ſermon he preached was on the 21ſt of June, 1691, at Aſhburton, from 1 Cor. x. 12. *Wherefore let him that ſtandeth take heed leſt he fall.* It was a very pathetical diſcourſe, tending to awaken careleſs profeſſors, and to ſtir them up to be ſolicitous about their ſouls. After having preached this ſermon, he went to Exeter; and at Topſham, within three miles of that city, he preſided as moderator in an aſſembly of the Nonconformiſt miniſters of Devonſhire, who unanimouſly voted him into the chair: the occaſion of their meeting was about an union betwixt the Preſbyterians and Independents, which Mr Flavel was very zealous to promote, and brought to ſo great an iſſue in thoſe parts, that the miniſters declared their ſatisfaction with the heads of agreement concluded on by the London miniſters of thoſe denominations. Mr Flavel cloſed the work of the day with prayer and praiſes, in which his ſpirit was carried out with wonderful enlargement and affection.

He wrote a letter to an eminent miniſter in London, with an account of their proceedings, that ſame day that he died; providence ordering it ſo, that he ſhould finiſh that good work his heart was ſo intent upon, before he finiſhed his courſe.

The manner of his death was ſudden and ſurpriſing; his friends thought him as well that day in the evening of which he died, as he had been for many years: towards the end of ſupper he complained of a deadneſs in one of his hands, that he could not lift it to his head. This ſtruck his wife and his friends about him with aſtoniſhment; they uſed ſome means to recover it to its former ſtrength, but inſtead thereof, to their great grief the diſtemper ſeized all upon one ſide of his body. They put him to bed with all ſpeed, and ſent for phyſicians, but to no purpoſe; his diſtemper prevailed upon him ſo faſt, that in a ſhort time it made him ſpeechleſs. He was ſenſible of his approaching death; and when they carried him up ſtairs, expreſſed his opinion that it would be the laſt time; but added, I know that it will be well with me; which were ſome of his laſt words. Thus died this holy man of God ſuddenly, and without pain, not giving ſo much as one groan. He exchanged this life for a better, on the 26th day of June, 1691, in the 64th year of his age.

His corps was carried from Exeter to Dartmouth, attended by ſeveral miniſters, and a great many other perſons of good quality; abundance

Digitized by Google

dance of people rode out from Dartmouth, Totneſs, Newton, Aſhburton, and other places, to meet the corps; when it was taken out of the hearſe at the water ſide, his people and other friends could not forbear expreſſing the ſenſe of their great loſs, by floods of tears, and a bitter lamentation. It was interred the ſame night in Dartmouth church, and next day Mr George Troſſe, a miniſter of Exeter, preached his funeral-ſermon from Eliſha's lamentation upon the tranſlation of Elijah, 2 Kings ii. 12. *My father, my father, the chariot of* Iſrael, *and the horſemen thereof.*

We ſhall conclude with a character of Mr Flavel. He was a man of a middle ſtature, and full of life and activity: he was very thoughtful, and when not diſcourſing or reading, much taken up in meditation, which made him digeſt his notions well. He was ready to learn from every body, and as free to communicate what he knew. He was bountiful to his own relations, and very charitable to the poor, but eſpecially to the houſehold of faith, and the neceſſitous members of his own church, to whom, during their ſickneſs, he always ſent ſuitable ſupplies. He freely taught academical learning to four young men whom he bred to the miniſtry, and one of them he maintained all the while at his own charge. He was exceedingly affectionate to all the people of Dartmouth, of which we ſhall give one remarkable inſtance. When our fleet was firſt engaged with the French, he called his people together to a ſolemn faſt, and, like a man in an agony, wreſtled with God in prayer for the church and nation, and particularly for the poor ſeamen of Dartmouth, that they might obtain mercy; the Lord heard and anſwered him, for not one of that town was killed in the fight, though many of them were in the engagement. As he was a faithful ambaſſador to his Maſter, he made his example the rule of his own practice, and was ſo far from reviling again, thoſe that reviled him, that he prayed for thoſe that deſpitefully uſed him: one remarkable inſtance of which is as follows: In 1685, ſome of the people of Dartmouth, accompanied too by ſome of the magiſtrates, made up his effigy, carried it through the ſtreets in deriſion, with the covenant and bill of excluſion pinned to it, and ſet it upon a boneſire, and burnt it; ſome of the ſpectators were ſo much affected with the reproach and ignominy done to this reverend and pious miniſter, that they wept, and others ſcoffed and jeered: it was obſervable, that at the very ſame time, though he knew nothing of the matter, he was heaping coals of fire of another nature upon the heads of thoſe wicked men, for he was then praying for the town of Dartmouth, its magiſtrates and inhabitants; and when news was brought him, upon the concluſion of his prayer, what they had been doing, he lifted up his prayer unto God for them in our Saviour's words, *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*

THE

Digitized by Google

THE

FOUNTAIN OF LIFE

OPENED UP:

OR,

A DISPLAY of CHRIST in his Eſſential and Mediatorial Glory.

Containing Forty-two Sermons on various Texts.

To his much honoured and beloved Kinſman, Mr John Flavel, *of* London, *Merchant, and his virtuous Conſort, the Author wiſheth Grace, Mercy, and Peace.*

MY DEAR AND HONOURED FRIENDS,

IF my pen were both able, and at leiſure, to get glory in paper, it would be but a paper glory when I had gotten it: but if by diſplaying (which is the deſign of theſe papers) the tranſcendent excellency of Jeſus Chriſt, I may win glory to him from you, to whom I humbly offer them, or from any other into whoſe hands providence ſhall caſt them, that will be glory indeed, and an occaſion of glorifying God to all eternity.

It is not the deſign of this epiſtle to *compliment*, but to *benefit* you; not to blazon your excellencies, but Chriſt's; not to acquaint the world how much you have *endeared* me to yourſelves, but to increaſe and ſtrengthen the *endearments* betwixt Chriſt and *you*, upon your part. I might indeed (this being a proper place for it) pay you my acknowledgments for your great kindneſſes to me and mine; of which, I aſſure you, I have, and ever ſhall have, the moſt grateful ſenſe: but you and I are theatre enough to one another, and can ſatisfy ourſelves with the incloſed comforts and delights of our

Digitized by Google

mutual love and friendſhip. But let me tell you, the whole world is not a theatre large enough to ſhew the glory of Chriſt upon, or unfold the one half of the unſearchable riches that lie hid in him. Theſe things will be far better underſtood, and ſpoken of in heaven, by the noon-day divinity, in which the immediately illuminated aſſembly do there preach his praiſes, than by ſuch a ſtammering tongue, and ſcribbling pen as mine, which doth but mar them.

Alas! I write his praiſes but by moon-light; I cannot praiſe him ſo much as by halves. Indeed, no tongue but his own (as Nazianzen ſaid of Baſil) is ſufficient to undertake that taſk. What ſhall I ſay of Chriſt? The excelling glory of that object dazzles all apprehenſion, ſwallows up all expreſſion. When we have borrowed metaphors from every creature that hath any excellency or lovely property in it, till we have ſtript the whole creation bare of all its ornaments, and clothed Chriſt with all that glory; when we have even worn out our tongues, in aſcribing praiſes to him, alas! we have done nothing, when all is done.

Yet, wo is me! how do I every day behold reaſonable ſouls moſt unreaſonably diſaffected to my lovely Lord Jeſus! denying love to One, who is able to compel love from the ſtonieſt heart! yea, though they can never make ſo much of their love (would they ſet it to ſale) as Chriſt bids for it.

'Tis horrid and amazing to ſee how the minds of many are captivated and enſnared by every ſilly trifle; and how others can indifferently turn them with a kind of ſpontaneity to this object, or to that (as their fancy ſtrikes) among the whole univerſe of beings, and ſcarce ever reluctate, recoil, or nauſeate, till they be perſuaded to Chriſt. In their unconverted ſtate, it is as eaſy to melt the obdùrate rocks into ſweet ſyrup, as their hearts into divine love.

How do the great men of the world ambitiouſly court the honours and pleaſures of it? The merchants of the earth trade, and ſtrive for the dear-bought treaſures of it; whilſt the price of Chriſt (alas! ever too low) falls every day lower and lower upon the exchange of this world! I ſpeak it as a ſad truth, if there were no quicker a trade (as dead as they ſay it is) for the periſhing treaſures of the earth, than there is for Chriſt this day in England, the exchange would quickly be ſhut up, and all the trading companies diſſolved.

Dear Sir, Chriſt is the peerleſs pearl hid in the field, Mat. xiii. 46. Will you be that *wiſe merchant*, that reſolves to win and compaſs that treaſure, whatever it ſhall coſt you? Ah, Sir, Chriſt is a commodity that can never be bought too dear.

Mr dear kinſman, my fleſh, and my blood; my ſoul thirſteth for your ſalvation, and the ſalvation of your family. Shall you and

Digitized by Google

I resolve with good Joshua, that whatever others do, "we and our families will serve the Lord;" that we will walk as the redeemed by his blood, shewing forth his virtues and praises in the world? that as God hath made us one in name, and one in affection, so we may be one in Christ; that it may be said of us, as it was of Austin and Alippous long ago, that they were *sanguine Christi conglutinati*, glued together by the blood of Christ.

For my own part, I have given in my name to him long since; wo to me, if I have not given in my heart also: for, should I deceive myself in so deep a point as that, how would my *profession* as a *Christian*, my *calling* as a *minister*, yea, these very sermons now in your hands, rise in judgment to condemn me? which God forbid.

And doubtless, Sir, your eyes have seen both the vanity of all creatures, and the necessity and infinite worth of Christ. You cannot forget what a vanity the world appeared to you, when in the year 1668, you were summoned by the messengers of death (as you and all that were about you then apprehended) to shoot the gulph of vast eternity; when a malignant fever and pleurisy (whereof your * physician hath given an account to the world) did shake the whole frame of the tabernacle wherein your soul through mercy yet dwells; and long may it dwell there, for the service and praise of your great Deliverer. I hope you have not, nor ever will forget how vain the world appeared to your eye, when you looked back (as it were over your shoulder) and saw how it shrunk away from you; nor will you ever forget the awful apprehensions of eternity that then seized your spirit, or the value you then had for Christ; which things, I hope, still do, and ever will remain with you.

* *Dr Thomson's* Αιματιωσις, *p.* 91.

And for you, dear cousin, as it becomes a daughter of Sarah, let your soul be adorned with the excellencies of Christ, and beauties of holiness. A king from heaven makes suit for your love: if he espouse your soul now, he will fetch it home to himself at death in his chariot of salvation; and great shall be your joy, when the marriage of the Lamb is come. Look often upon Christ in this glass; he is fairer than the children of men. View him believingly, and you cannot but like and love him. "For (as one well saith) love, when it seeth, cannot but cast out its spirit and strength upon amiable objects and things lovely worthy. And what fairer things than Christ! O fair sun, and fair moon, and fair stars, and fair flowers, and fair roses, and fair lilies, and fair creatures! but, O ten thousand, thousand times fairer Lord Jesus! Alas, I wronged him in making the comparison this way. O black sun and moon; but O fair Lord

Ep. S. R.

Digitized by Google

" Jeſus! O black flowers, and black lilies and roſes; but O fair, " fair, ever fair Lord Jeſus! O all fair things, black, deformed, " and without beauty, when ye are ſet beſide the faireſt Lord " Jeſus! O black heaven, but O fair Chriſt! O black angels, but " O ſurpaſſingly fair Lord Jeſus."

I hope you both are agreed with Chriſt, according to the articles of peace propounded to you in the goſpel; and that you are every day driving on ſalvation work, betwixt him and you, in your family, and in your cloſets.

And now, my dear friends, if theſe diſcoveries of Chriſt, which I humbly offer to your hands, may be any way uſeful to your ſouls, to aſſiſt them either in obtaining, or in clearing their intereſt in him, my heart ſhall rejoice, even mine; for none under heaven can be more willing, though many are more able, to help you thither, than is

YOUR AFFECTIONATE AND OBLIGED,

From my Study at Dartmouth,
March 14th, 1671.

KINSMAN AND SERVANT,

JOHN FLAVEL.

Digitized by Google

TO THE CHRISTIAN READERS,

Especially those in the Town and Corporation of Dartmouth, *and Parts adjacent, who have either befriended, or attended these Lectures.*

HONOURED AND WORTHY FRIENDS,

KNOWLEDGE is man's excellency above the beasts that perish, Psal. xxxii. 9. the knowledge of Christ is the Christian's excellency above the Heathen, 1 Cor. i. 23, 24. Practical and saving knowledge of Christ is the sincere Christian's excellency above the self-cozening hypocrite, Heb. vi. 4, 6. but methodical and well-digested knowledge of Christ is the strong Christian's excellency above the weak, Heb. v. 12, 13, 14. A saving, though an immethodical knowledge of Christ, will bring us to heaven, John xvii. 2. but a regular and methodical, as well as a saving knowledge of him, will bring heaven into us, Col. ii. 2, 3.

For such is the excellency thereof, even above all other knowledge of Christ, that it renders the understanding judicious, the memory tenacious, and the heart highly and fixedly joyous. How it serves to confirm and perfect the understanding, is excellently discovered by a worthy divine of our own, in these words:

A young ungrounded Christian, when he seeth all the fundamental truths, and seeth good evidence and reasons of them, perhaps may be yet ignorant of the right order and place of every truth. It is a rare thing to have young professors to understand the necessary truths methodically; and this is a very great defect: for a great part of the usefulness and excellency of particular truths consisteth in the respect they have to one another. This therefore will be a very considerable part of your confirmation, and growth in your understandings, to see the body of the Christian doctrine, as it were, at one view, as the several parts of it are united in one perfect frame; and to know what aspect one point hath upon another, and which are their due places. There is a great difference betwixt the sight of the several parts of a clock or watch, as they are disjointed and scattered abroad, and the seeing of them conjointed, and in use and motion. To see here a pin, and there a wheel, and not know how to set them all together, nor ever see them in their due places, will give but little satisfaction. It is the frame and design of holy doctrine that must be known, and every part should be discerned as it hath its particular use to that design, and as it is connected with the other parts.

Mr Baxter's directions to the converted for their establishment, p. 96.

By this means only can the true nature of Theology, together with the harmony and perfection of truth, be clearly understood.

Digitized by Google

And every ſingle truth alſo will be much better perceived by him that ſeeth its place and order, than by any other: for one truth exceedingly illuſtrates and leads another into the underſtanding. —Study therefore to grow in the more methodical knowledge of the ſame truths which you have received; and though you are not yet ripe enough to diſcern the whole body of theology in due method, yet ſee ſo much as you have attained to know, in the right order, and placing of every part. As in anatomy, it is hard for the wiſeſt phyſician to diſcern the courſe of every branch of the veins and arteries; but yet they may eaſily diſcern the place and order of the principal parts, and greater veſſels, (and ſurely in the body of religion there are no branches of greater or more neceſſary truth than theſe) ſo it is in divinity, where no man hath a perfect view of the whole, till he comes to the ſtate of perfection with God; but every true Chriſtian hath the knowledge of all the eſſentials, and may know the orders and places of them all.

And as it ſerves to render the mind more judicious, ſo it cauſes the memory to be more tenacious, and retentive of truths. The chain of truth is eaſily held in the memory, when one truth links in another; but the looſing of a link endangers the ſcattering of the whole chain. We uſe to ſay, order is the mother of memory; I am ſure it is a ſingular friend to it: hence it is obſerved, thoſe that write of the art of memory, lay ſo great a ſtreſs upon place and number. The memory would not ſo ſoon be overcharged with a multitude of truths, if that multitude were but orderly diſpoſed. It is the incoherence and confuſion of truths, rather than their number, that diſtracts. Let but the underſtanding receive them regularly, and the memory will retain them with much more facility. A bad memory is a common complaint among Chriſtians: all the benefit that many of you have in hearing, is from the preſent influence of truths upon your hearts; there is but little that ſticks by you, to make a ſecond and third impreſſion upon them. I know it may be ſaid of ſome of you, that if your affections were not better than your memories, you would need a very large charity to paſs for Chriſtians. I confeſs it is better to have a well ordered heart, than a methodical head; but ſurely both are better than either. And for you that have conſtantly attended theſe exerciſes, and followed us through the whole ſeries and deduction of theſe truths, from text to text, and from point to point; who have begun one ſabbath where you left another; it will be your inexcuſable fault, if theſe things be not fixed in your underſtanding and memories, as nails faſtened in a ſure place: eſpecially as providence hath now brought to your eyes, what hath been ſo often ſounded in your ears, which is no ſmall help to fix theſe truths upon you, and prevent that great hazard of them, which com-

Digitized by Google

monly attends bare hearing; for now you may have recourſe as often as you will to them, view and review them, till they become your own.

But though this be a great and ſingular advantage, yet it is not all you may have by a methodical *underſtanding of the doctrines of Chriſt*: it is more than a judicious underſtanding them, or faithful remembering them, that you and I muſt deſign, even the warm, vital, animating influences of theſe truths upon our hearts, without which we ſhall be never the better; yea, much the worſe for knowing and remembering them.

Truth is the ſanctifying inſtrument, John xvii. 17. the mould into which our ſouls are caſt, Rom. vi. 17. according therefore to the ſtamps and impreſſions it makes upon our underſtandings, and the order in which truths lie there, will be the depth and laſtingneſs of their impreſſions and influences upon the heart; as, the more weight is laid upon the ſeal, the more fair and laſting impreſſion is made upon the wax. He that ſees the grounds and reaſons of his peace and comfort moſt clearly, is like to maintain it the more conſtantly.

Great therefore is the advantage Chriſtians have by ſuch methodical ſyſtems. Surely they may be ſet down among the *deſiderata Chriſtianorum*, The moſt deſired things of Chriſtians.

Divers worthy modern pens have indeed undertaken this noble ſubject before me, ſome more * ſuccinctly, others more † copiouſly: theſe have done worthily, and their praiſes are in the churches of Chriſt; yet ſuch breadth there is in the knowledge of Chriſt, that not only thoſe who have written on this ſubject before me, but a thouſand authors more may employ their pens after us, and not interfere with, or ſtraiten another.

* *Mr Wall's None but Chriſt.*
† *Mr Iſaac Ambroſe, his Looking to Jeſus.*

And ſuch is the deliciouſneſs of this ſubject, that, were there ten thouſand volumes written upon it, they would never cloy, or become nauſeous to a gracious heart. We uſe to ſay, *one thing tires*, and it is true that it doth ſo, except that one thing be virtually and eminently all things, as Chriſt is; and then one thing can never tire; for ſuch is the variety of ſweetneſs in Chriſt, who is the *delicia humani generis*, the delights of the children of men, that every time he is opened to believers from pulpit or preſs, it is as if heaven had furniſhed them with a new Chriſt; and yet he is the ſame Chriſt ſtill.

The treatiſe itſelf will ſatisfy you, that I have not boaſted in another man's line, of things made ready to my hand; which I ſpeak not in the leaſt to win any praiſe to myſelf from the undertaking, but to remove prejudice from it; for I ſee more defects in

Digitized by Google

it, than moſt of my readers will ſee; and can forethink more faults to be found in it, than I now ſhall ſtand to tell thee of, or anſwer for. It was written in a time of great diſtractions; and didſt thou but know how oft this work hath died and revived under my hand, thou wouldſt wonder that ever it came to thine.

I am ſenſible it may fall under ſome cenſorious (it may be, envious) eyes, and that far different judgments will paſs upon it; for *pro captu lectoris habent ſua fata libelli:* And no wonder if a treatiſe of Chriſt be, when Chriſt himſelf was to ſome, "a ſtone of ſtumbling, and a rock of offence." I expect not to pleaſe every reader, eſpecially the envious; *magna debet eſſe eloquentia, quæ invitis placet.* It is as hard for ſome to look upon other men's gifts without envy, as it is to look upon their own without pride; nor will I be any further concerned with ſuch readers, than to pity them; well knowing that every proud, contemptuous and envious cenſure is a granado that breaks in the hand of him that caſts it.

But to the ingenuous and candid reader, I owe ſatisfaction for the obſcurity of ſome part of this diſcourſe, occaſioned by the conciſeneſs of the ſtile; to which I have this only to ſay, that I was willing to croud as much matter as I could into this number of ſheets in thy hand, that I might therein eaſe thee both in thy pains and thy purſe. I confeſs the ſermons were preached in a more relaxed ſtile, and moſt of theſe things were enlarged in the pulpit, which are deſignedly contracted in the preſs, that the volume might not ſwell above the ability of common readers. And it was my purpoſe at firſt to have compriſed the ſecond part, viz. *The application of the redemption that is with Chriſt unto ſinners*, in one volume, which occaſioned the contraction of this; but that making a juſt volume itſelf, muſt await another ſeaſon to ſee the light. If the reader will be but a little the more intent and conſiderate in reading, this conciſeneſs will turn to his advantage.

This may ſuffice to ſhew the uſefulneſs of ſuch compoſures, and prevent offence; but ſomething yet remains with me, to ſay to the readers in general, to thoſe of this town in ſpecial, and to the flock committed by Chriſt to my charge more eſpecially.

1. To readers in general, according as their different ſtates and conditions may be; there are ſix things earneſtly to be requeſted of them.

(1.) If you be yet ſtrangers to Chriſt, let theſe things begin, and beget your firſt acquaintance with him. I aſſure thee, reader, it was a principal part of the deſign thereof; and here thou wilt find many directions, helps, and ſweet encouragements, to aſſiſt a poor ſtranger as thou art, in that great work. Say not, I am an enemy to Chriſt, and there is no hope of reconciliation; for here thou wilt ſee, how "God was in Chriſt reconciling the world to

Digitized by Google

"himself." Say not, all this is nothing, except God had told thee so, and appointed some to treat with thee about it; "for he "hath committed unto us the word of this reconciliation." Say not, yea, that may be from your own pity and compassion for us, and not from any commission you have for it; for we "are ambassadors for Christ," 1 Cor. v. 19.

Say not, O but my sins are greater than can be forgiven: the difficulties of my salvation are too great to be overcome, especially by a poor creature as I am, that am able to do nothing, no, not to raise one penny towards the discharge of that great debt I owe to God. For here thou wilt find, upon thy union with Christ, that there is merit enough in his blood, and mercy enough in his bowels, to justify and save such a one as thou art. Yea, and I will add for thine encouragement, that it is a righteous thing with God to justify and save thee, that canst not pay him one penny of all the vast sums thou owest him; when, by the same rule of justice, he condemns the most strict, self-righteous Pharisee, that thinks thereby to quit scores with him. It is righteous for a judge to cast him that hath paid ninety-nine pounds of the hundred which he owed, because the payment was not full; and to acquit him, whose surety hath paid all, though himself did not, and freely confess that he cannot pay one farthing of the whole debt.

(2.) If thou be a self-deceiving soul, that easily takest up thy satisfaction about thine interest in Christ, look to it, as thou valuest thy soul, reader, that a fond and groundless conceit of thine interest in Christ do not effectually and finally obstruct a true and saving interest in him. This is the common and fatal error in which multitudes of souls are ensnared and ruined: for look as a conceit of great wisdom hinders many from the attaining of it; so a groundless conceit that Christ is already thine, may prove the greatest obstacle between Christ and thee: but here thou wilt meet with many rules that will not deceive thee, trials that will open thy true condition to thee.

Quam multi sapuissent nisi se prius sapere putassent? i. e. *How many might have been wise, if they had not thought themselves wise already?* Sen.

Thou sometimes reflectest upon the state of thy soul, and enquirest, is Christ mine? may I depend upon it, that my condition is safe? Thy heart returns thee an answer of peace, it speaks as thou wouldst have it. But remember, friend, and mark this line, *Thy final sentence is not yet come from the mouth of thy Judge; and what if, after all thy self-flattering hopes and groundless confidences, a sentence should come from him quite cross to that of thine own heart? where art thou then? what a confounded person wilt thou be? Christless, speechless, and hopeless, all at once!*

Digitized by Google

O therefore build ſure for eternity; take heed leſt the loſs of thine eternal happineſs be at laſt imputed by thee to the deceitfulneſs and lazineſs of thine own heart; leſt thy heart ſay to thee in hell, as the heart of Apollodorus ſeemed in his ſufferings to ſay to him, *I am the cauſe of all this miſery to thee.*

(3.) If thou be one whoſe heart is eagerly ſet upon this vain world, I beſeech thee take heed, leſt it interpoſe itſelf betwixt Chriſt and thy ſoul, and ſo cut thee off from him for ever. O beware, leſt the duſt of the earth, getting into thine eyes, ſo blind thee, that thou never ſee the beauty or neceſſity of Chriſt. The god of this world ſo blinds the eyes of them that believe not. And, what are ſparkling pleaſures that dazzles the eyes of ſome, and the diſtracting cares that wholly divert the minds of others, but as a napkin drawn by Satan over the eyes of them that are to be turned off into hell? 1 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

Some general aims, and faint wiſhes after Chriſt you may have; but, alas! the world has centered thy heart, intangled thy affections, and will daily find new diverſions for them from the great buſineſs of life; ſo that, if the Lord break not this ſnare, thou wilt never be able to deliver thy ſoul.

(4.) If thou be a looſe and careleſs profeſſor of Chriſt, I beſeech thee, let the things thou ſhalt read in this treatiſe of Chriſt, convince, ſhame, and reclaim thee from thy vain converſation. Here thou wilt find how contrary thy converſation is to the grand deſigns of the death and reſurrection of Chriſt. Oh, methinks as thou art reading the deep humiliation, and unſpeakable ſorrows Chriſt underwent for the expiating of ſin, thou ſhouldſt thenceforth look upon ſin as a tender child would look upon that knife that ſtabbed his father to the heart! thou ſhouldſt never whet and ſharpen it again to wound the Son of God afreſh. To ſuch looſe and careleſs profeſſors, I particularly recommend the laſt *general uſe* of this diſcourſe, containing many great motives to reformation and ſtrict godlineſs in all that call upon the name of the Lord Jeſus.

(5.) If thou haſt been a profane and vain perſon, but now art pardoned, and doſt experience the ſuperabounding riches of grace; my requeſt to thee is, that thou love Jeſus Chriſt with a more fervent love than ever yet thou hadſt for him. Here thou wilt find many great incentives, many mighty arguments to ſuch a love of Chriſt. Poor ſoul, conſider what thou haſt been, what the morning of thy life was, what treaſures of guilt thou laidſt up in thoſe days; and then think, can ſuch a one as I receive mercy, and that mercy not break my heart? Can I read my pardon, and mine eyes not drop? What! mercy for ſuch a wretch as I! a pardon

Digitized by Google

for ſuch a rebel! O what an ingenuous thaw ſhould this cauſe upon my heart! if it do not, what a ſtrange heart is thine!

Did the love of Chriſt break through ſo many impediments to come to thee? Did it make its way through the law, through the wrath of God, through the grave, through thine own unbelief and great unworthineſs, to come to thee? O what a love was the love of Chriſt to thy ſoul! And is not thy love ſtrong enough to break through the vanities and trifles of this world, which intangle it, to go to Chriſt? How poor, how low and weak is thy love to Chriſt then?

(6.) *Laſtly*, Art thou one that haſt through mercy at laſt attained aſſurance, or good hope, through grace, of thy intereſt in Chriſt? Rejoice then in thy preſent mercy, and long ardently to be with thine own Chriſt in his glory. There be many things diſperſed through this treatiſe, of Chriſt, to animate ſuch joy, and excite ſuch longings. It was truly obſerved by a worthy author, (whoſe words I have mentioned more freely than his name in this diſcourſe) *That it is in a manner as natural for us to leap when we ſee the new Jeruſalem, as it is to laugh when we are tickled: Joy is not under the ſoul's command, when Chriſt kiſſeth it.* And for your deſires to be with Chriſt, what conſideration can you find in this world ſtrong enough to rein them in? O when you ſhall conſider what he hath done, ſuffered, and purchaſed for you, where he is now, and how much he longs for your coming, your very hearts ſhould groan out thoſe words, Phil. i. 23. "I deſire to be diſſolved, and to be with Chriſt." The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for of Chriſt. *Mr S. R.*

2. Having delivered my meſſage to the reader in general, I have ſomewhat more particularly to ſay to you of this place.

You are a people that were born under, and bred up with the goſpel. It hath been your ſingular privilege, above many towns and pariſhes in England, to enjoy more than ſixty years together an able and fruitful miniſtry among you. The dew of heaven lay upon you, as it did upon Gideon's fleece, when the ground was dry in other places about you; you have been richly watered with goſpel-ſhowers; you, with Capernaum, have been exalted to heaven in the means of grace. And it muſt be owned to your praiſe, that you teſtified more reſpect to the goſpel than many other places have done, and treated Chriſt's ambaſſadors with more civility, whilſt they propheſied in ſackcloth, than ſome other places did. Theſe things are praiſe-worthy in you. But all this, and much more than this, amounts not to that which Jeſus Chriſt expects from you, and which in his name I would now perſuade you to. And O that I (the leaſt and unworthieſt of all the meſſengers of

Digitized by Google

Chriſt to you) might indeed prevail with all that are Chriſtleſs among you, (1.) To anſwer the long continued calls of God to you, by a thorough and ſound converſion, *that the long-ſuffering of God may be your ſalvation*, and you may not *receive all this grace of God in vain.* O that the damned might never be ſet a wondering, to ſee a people of your advantages for heaven, ſinking as much below many of themſelves in miſery, as you now are above them in means and mercy.

Dear friends, my heart's deſire and prayer to God for you is, that you may be ſaved. O that I knew how to engage this whole town to Jeſus Chriſt, and make faſt the marriage-knot betwixt him and you, albeit after that I ſhould preſently go to the place of ſilence, and ſee men no more, with the inhabitants of the world. Ah ſirs! methinks I ſee the Lord Jeſus laying the merciful hand of a holy violence upon you: methinks he calls to you, as the angel to Lot, ſaying, "Ariſe, leſt ye be conſumed; And "while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, the Lord "being merciful unto him, And they brought him without the "city, and ſaid, Eſcape for thy life, ſtay not in all the plain; "eſcape to the mountain, leſt thou be conſumed," Gen. xix. 15. How often (to allude to this) hath Jeſus Chriſt in like manner laid hold upon you in the preaching of the goſpel, and will you not flee for refuge to him? Will you rather be conſumed, than endeavour an eſcape? A beaſt will not be driven into the fire, and will not you be kept out? The merciful Lord Jeſus, by his admirable patience and bounty, hath convinced you how loth he is to leave or loſe you. To this day his arms are ſtretched forth to gather you, and will you not be gathered? Alas for my poor neighbours! Muſt ſo many of them periſh at laſt? What ſhall I do for the daughter of my people?

Lord, by what arguments ſhall they be perſuaded to be happy? What will win them effectually to thy Chriſt? They have many of them eſcaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour. They are a people that love thine ordinances, they take delight in approaching to God; thou haſt beautified many of them with lovely and obliging tempers and diſpoſitions. Thus far they are come, there they ſtick; and beyond this no power but thine can move them. O thou, to whoſe hand this work is and muſt be left, put forth thy ſaving power and reveal thine arm for their ſalvation: Thou haſt glorified thy name in many of them; Lord, glorify it again.

(2.) My next requeſt is, that you will all be perſuaded, whether converted or unconverted, to ſet up all the duties of religion in your families, and govern your children and ſervants as men that muſt give an account to God for them in the great day. O that

Digitized by Google

there were not a prayerleſs family in this town! How little will their tables differ from the manger, where beaſts feed together, if God be not owned and acknowledged there, in your eating and drinking? And how can you expect bleſſings ſhould dwell in your tabernacles, if God be not called on there? Say not, you want time for it, or that your neceſſities will not allow it; for, had you been more careful of theſe duties, it is like you had not been expoſed to ſuch neceſſities: beſides, you can find time to be idle, you can waſte a part of every day vainly; Why could not that time be redeemed for God? Moreover, you will not deny but the ſucceſs of all your affairs at home and abroad depends upon the bleſſing of God; and if ſo, think you it is not the right way, even to temporal proſperity, to engage his preſence and bleſſing with you, in whoſe hands your all is? Say not, your children and ſervants are ignorant of God, and therefore you cannot comfortably join with them in thoſe duties; for the neglect of thoſe duties is the cauſe of their ignorance; and it is not like they will be better, till you uſe God's means to make them ſo.

Beſides, prayer is a part of natural worſhip, and the vileſt among men are bound to pray, elſe the neglect of it were none of their ſin. O let not a duty, upon which ſo many and great bleſſings hang, fall to the ground, upon ſuch ſilly (not to ſay wicked) pretences to ſhift it off. Remember, death will ſhortly break up all your families, and diſband them; and who then think you will have moſt comfort in beholding their dead? The day of account alſo haſtens, and then, who will have the moſt comfortable appearing before the juſt and holy God? Set up, I beſeech you, the ancient and comfortable duties of reading the ſcriptures, ſinging of pſalms, and prayer, in all your dwelling-places. And do all theſe conſcientiouſly, as men that have to do with God; and try the Lord herewith, if he will not return in a way of mercy to you, and reſtore even your outward proſperity to you again. However, to be ſure, far greater encouragements than that lie before you, to oblige you to your duties.

(3.) More eſpecially, I have a few things to ſay to you that have attended on the miniſtry, or are under my overſight in a more particular manner, and then I have done. And,

1*ſt*, I cannot but obſerve to you the goodneſs of our God, yea, the riches of his goodneſs:

Who freely gave Jeſus Chriſt out of his own boſom for us, and hath not withheld his Spirit, ordinances and miniſters, to reveal and apply him to us. Here's love that wants an epithet to match it:

Who engaged my heart upon this tranſcendent ſubject in the courſe of my miniſtry among you: a ſubject which angels ſtudy and admire, as well as we:

Digitized by Google

Who ſo ſignally protected and overſhadowed our aſſembly in thoſe days of trouble, wherein theſe truths were delivered to you. You then ſat down under his ſhadow with great delight, and his fruit was ſweet to your taſte: his banner over you was love; your bread was then ſure, and your waters failed not: Yea, ſuch was his peculiar indulgence, and ſpecial tenderneſs to you, that he ſuffered no man to do you harm; and it can hardly be imagined any could attempt it that had but known this, and no worſe than this, to be your only deſign and buſineſs:

Who made theſe meditations of Chriſt a ſtrong ſupport, and ſweet relief to *mine*, now with Chriſt, and no leſs to me, under the greateſt exerciſes and trials that ever befel me in this world; preſerving me yet (though a broken veſſel) for ſome farther uſe and ſervice to your ſouls:

Who in the years that are paſt left not himſelf without witneſs among us, bleſſing my labours, to the converſion and edification of many; ſome of which yet remain with us, but ſome are fallen aſleep:

Who hath made many of you that yet remain, a willing and obedient people, who have in ſome meaſure ſupported the reputation of religion by your ſtability and integrity in days of abounding iniquity: My joy and my crown; ſo ſtand ye faſt in the Lord!

Who after all the days of fears and troubles, through which we have paſt, hath at laſt given us and his churches reſt; "that we "being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might ſerve "him without fear in righteouſneſs and holineſs (which doing, "this mercy may be extended to us) all the days of our life."

In teſtimony of a thankful heart for theſe invaluable mercies, I humbly and cheerfully rear up this pillar of remembrance, inſcribing it with EBEN-EZER, and JEHOVAH-JIREH!

2*dly*, As I could not but obſerve theſe things to you, ſo I have a few things to requeſt of you, in neither of which I can bear a denial, ſo deeply Chriſt's, your own, and my intereſt lie in them.

(1.) Look to it, my dear friends, that none of you be found Chriſtleſs at your appearance before him. Thoſe that continue Chriſtleſs now, will be left ſpeechleſs then. God forbid that you that have heard ſo much of Chriſt, and you that have profeſſed ſo much of Chriſt, ſhould at laſt fall into a worſe condition than thoſe that never heard the name of Chriſt.

(2.) See that you daily grow more Chriſt-like by converſing with him, as you do, in his precious ordinances. Let it be with your ſouls, as it is with a piece of cloth, which receives a deeper dye every time it is dipt into a vat. If not, you may not expect the continuance of your mercies much longer to you.

(3.) Get theſe great truths well digeſted both in your heads and

Digitized by Google

hearts, and let the power of them be diſplayed in your lives, elſe the pen of the ſcribe, and the tongue of the preacher, are both in vain. Theſe things, that ſo often warmed your hearts from the *pulpit*, return now to make a ſecond impreſſion upon them from the *preſs*. Hereby you will recover and fix thoſe truths, which, it is like, are in great part already vaniſhed from you.

This is the fruit I promiſe myſelf from you: and whatever entertainment it meets with from others in this Chriſt-deſpiſing age, yet two things relieve me; one is, that future times may produce more humble and hungry Chriſtians than this glutted age enjoys, to whom it will be welcome: the other is, that duty is diſcharged, and endeavours are uſed to bring men to Chriſt, and build them up in him; wherein he doth and will rejoice, who is a well-wiſher to the ſouls of men.

The next age, perhaps will produce a race of men of finer diſpoſitions and a gentler turn, than this age has produced. Arit. Prob.

JOHN FLAVEL.

Digitized by Google

THE

FOUNTAIN OF LIFE.

SERMON I.

Opens the EXCELLENCY of the SUBJECT.

1 COR. ii. 2.

For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

THE former verse contains an apology for the plain and familiar manner of the apostle's preaching, which was not (as he there tells them) with excellency of speech, or of wisdom; *i. e.* he studied not to gratify their curiosity with rhetorical strains, or philosophical niceties. In this he gives the reason, "for I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ," *&c.**

"I determined not to know."†] The meaning is not, that he simply despised, or contemned all other studies and knowledge; but so far only, as they stand in competition with, or opposition to the study and knowledge of Jesus Christ. And it is as if he should say, it is my stated, settled judgment; not a hasty, inconsiderate censure, but the product and issue of my most serious and exquisite enquiries. After I have well weighed the case, turned it round, viewed it exactly on every side, balanced all advantages and disadvantages, pondered all things that are fit to come into consideration about it; this is the result and final determination, that all other knowledge, how profitable, how pleasant soever, is not worthy to be named in the same day with the knowledge of Jesus

* *Non* τεχνολογιν, *sed* θεολογειν, *i. e.* Not to teach arts and sciences, but religion.

† Ου κεκρινα τι ειδεναι τι εν υμιν,—I did not judge it equitable to know with marked regard any thing among you. He does not contemn all other knowledge, except when it rivals the knowledge of Christ, *&c.*

Digitized by Google

Christ. This, therefore, I resolve to make the scope and end of my ministry, and the end regulates the mean; such pedantic toys, and airy notions as injudicious ears affect, would rather obstruct than promote my grand design among you; therefore, wholly waving that way, I applied myself to a plain, popular, unaffected dialect, fitted rather to pierce the heart, and convince the conscience, than to tickle the fancy. This is the scope of the words, in which three things fall under consideration;

First, The subject-matter of his doctrine, to wit, *Jesus Christ*. "I determined to know nothing," *i. e.* to study nothing myself, to teach nothing to you, but "Jesus Christ." Christ shall be the centre to which all the lines of my ministry shall be drawn. I have spoken and written of many other subjects in my sermons and epistles, but it is all *reductively* the preaching and discovery of Jesus Christ: of all the subjects in the world, this is the sweetest; if there be any thing on this side heaven, worthy our time and studies, this is it. Thus he magnifies his doctrine, from the excellency of its subject-matter, accounting all other doctrines but airy things, compared with this.

Secondly, We have here *that special respect or consideration of Christ*, which he singled out from all the rest of the excellent truths of Christ, to spend the main strength of his ministry upon; and that is, *Christ as crucified:* and the rather, because hereby he would obviate the vulgar prejudice raised against him upon the account of his cross; "For Christ crucified was to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness, chap. i. 23. This also best suited his end, to draw them on to Christ; as Christ above all other subjects, so Christ crucified above all things in Christ. There is, therefore, a great emphasis in this word, "and "him crucified."*

Thirdly, The manner in which he discoursed this transcendent subject to them, is also remarkable; he not only preached Christ crucified, but he preached him assiduously and plainly. He preached Christ frequently; "and whenever he preached of Christ "crucified, he preached him in a crucified stile."† This is the sum of the words; to let them know that his spirit was intent upon this subject, as if he neither knew, nor cared to speak of any other. All his sermons were so full of Christ, that his hearers might have thought he was acquainted with no other doctrine. Hence observe,

* *Vehementem habet ἐμφασιν quod adjecit, & hunc crucifixum.* He writes with peculiar emphasis—*And him crucified.* Pet. Martyr in Loc.

† *Christum crucifixum stylo crucifixo prædicabat.*

Digitized by Google

Doct. *That there is no doctrine more excellent in itself, or more necessary to be preached and studied, than the doctrine of Jesus Christ, and him crucified.*

All other knowledge, how much soever it be magnified in the world, is and ought to be esteemed but dross, in comparison of the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ, Phil. iii. 8. "In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," Col. ii. 3.*

Eudoxus was so affected with the glory of the sun, that he thought he was born only to behold it; much more should a Christian judge himself born only to behold and delight in the glory of the Lord Jesus.

The truth of this proposition will be made out by a double consideration of the doctrine of Christ.

First, Let it be considered absolutely, and then these lovely properties with which it is naturally clothed, will render it superior to all other sciences and studies.

1*st*, The knowledge of Jesus Christ is the very marrow and kernel of all the scriptures; the scope and centre of all divine revelations: both Testaments meet in Christ. The ceremonial law is full of Christ, and all the gospel is full of Christ: the blessed lines of both Testaments meet in him; and how they both harmonize, and sweetly concentre in Jesus Christ, is the chief scope of that excellent *epistle to the Hebrews*, to discover; for we may call that *epistle* the sweet harmony of both Testaments. This argues the unspeakable excellency of this doctrine, the knowledge whereof must needs therefore be a key to unlock the greatest part of the sacred scriptures. For it is in the understanding of scripture, much as it is in the knowledge men have in logic and philosophy: if a scholar once come to understand the bottom-principle, upon which, as upon its hinge, the controversy turns, the true knowledge of that principle shall carry him through the whole controversy, and furnish him with a solution to every argument. Even so the right knowledge of Jesus Christ, like a clue, leads you through the whole labyrinth of the scriptures.

2*dly*, The knowledge of Jesus Christ is a *fundamental knowledge*; and foundations are most useful, though least seen. The knowledge of Christ is fundamental to all *graces*, *duties*, *comforts*, and *happiness*.

(1.) It is fundamental to all graces; they all begin in knowledge; Col. iii. 10. "The new man is renewed in knowledge."

* He that prefers any knowledge on earth, to this sacred and heavenly knowledge, chuseth trash before a treasure. *Davenant on Colos. chap.* ii. *ver.* 3.

Digitized by Google

As the old, ſo the new creation begins in light; the opening of the eyes is the firſt work of the Spirit; and as the beginnings of grace, ſo all the after-improvements thereof depend upon this increaſing knowledge, 2 Pet. iii. 18. "But grow in grace, and in "the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour." See how theſe two, grace and knowledge, keep equal pace in the ſoul of a Chriſtian; in what degree the one increaſes, the other increaſes anſwerably.

(2.) The knowledge of Chriſt is fundamental to all duties; the duties, as well as the graces of all Chriſtians, are all founded in the knowledge of Chriſt. Muſt a Chriſtian believe? That he can never do without the knowledge of Chriſt: faith is ſo much dependent on his knowledge, that it is denominated by it, Iſa. liii. 11. "By his knowledge ſhall my righteous ſervant juſtify many;" and hence, John vi. 40. ſeeing and believing are made the ſame thing. Would a man exerciſe hope in God? that he can never do without the knowledge of Chriſt, for he is the author of that hope, 1 Pet. i. 3. he is alſo its object, Heb. vi. 19. its ground-work and ſupport, Col. i. 27. And as you cannot believe or hope, ſo neither can you pray acceptably, without a competent degree of this knowledge. The very Heathen could ſay, *Non loquendum de Deo ſine lumine*, i. e. Men muſt not ſpeak of God without light: the true way of converſing with, and enjoying God in prayer, is by acting faith on him through a Mediator: ſo much comfort and true excellency there is in it, and no more. O then, how indiſpenſible is the knowledge of Chriſt, to all that do addreſs themſelves to God in any duty!

(3.) It is fundamental to all comforts: all the comforts of believers are ſtreams from this fountain. Jeſus Chriſt is the very object matter of a believer's joy, Phil. iii. 3. "Our rejoicing is in "Chriſt Jeſus." Take away the knowledge of Chriſt, and a Chriſtian is the moſt ſad and melancholy creature in the world: again, let Chriſt but manifeſt himſelf, and dart the beams of his light into their ſouls, it will make them kiſs the ſtakes, ſing in flames, and ſhout in the pangs of death, as men that divide the ſpoil.

Laſtly, This knowledge is fundamental to the eternal happineſs of ſouls: as we can perform no duty, enjoy no comfort, ſo neither can we be ſaved without it, John xvii. 3. "This is life eternal, to "know thee the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt whom thou haſt "ſent." And, if it be life eternal to know Chriſt, then it is eternal damnation to be ignorant of Chriſt: as *Chriſt* is the *door* that opens heaven, ſo *knowledge* is the *key* that opens Chriſt. The excellent gifts, and renowned parts of the moral Heathens, though they purchaſed to them great eſteem and honour among men, yet left them in a ſtate of perdition, becauſe of this great defect, they

Digitized by Google

were ignorant of Christ, 1 Cor. i. 21. Thus you see how fundamental the knowledge of Christ is, essentially necessary to all the graces, duties, comforts and happiness of souls.

3*dly*, The knowledge of Christ is profound and large; all other sciences are but shadows; this is a boundless, bottomless ocean; no creature hath a line long enough to fathom the depth of it; there is height, length, depth and breadth ascribed to it, Eph. iii. 14. yea, it passeth knowledge. There is * "a manifold wisdom of God in Christ," Eph. iii. 10. It is of many sorts and forms, of many folds and plates: it is indeed simple, pure and unmixed with any thing but itself, yet it is manifold in degrees, kinds and administrations; though something of Christ be unfolded in one age, and something in another, yet eternity itself cannot fully unfold him. I see something, said Luther, which blessed Austin saw not; and those that come after me, will see that which I see not. It is in the studying of Christ, as in the planting of a new discovered country; at first men sit down by the sea-side, upon the skirts and borders of the land; and there they dwell, but by degrees they search farther and farther into the heart of the country. Ah, the best of us are yet but upon the borders of this vast continent!

4*thly*, The study of Jesus Christ is the most noble subject that ever a soul spent itself upon; those that rack and torture their brains upon other studies, like children, weary themselves at a low game; the eagle plays at the sun itself. The angels study this doctrine, and stoop down to look into this deep abyss. What are the truths discovered in Christ, but the very secrets that from eternity lay hid in the bosom of God? Eph. iii. 8, 9. God's heart is opened to men in Christ, John i. 18. this makes the gospel such a glorious dispensation, because Christ is so gloriously revealed therein, 1 Cor. iii. 9. and the studying of Christ in the gospel, stamps such a heavenly glory upon the contemplating soul, ver. 18.

5*thly*, It is the most sweet and comfortable knowledge; to be studying Jesus Christ, what is it but to be digging among all the veins and springs of comfort? and the deeper you dig, the more do these springs flow upon you. How are hearts ravished with the discoveries of Christ in the gospel? what extasies, meltings, transports, do gracious souls meet there? Doubtless, Philip's extasy, John i. 25. ευρηκαμεν Ιησουν, "We have found Jesus," was far beyond that of Archimedes. A believer could sit from morning to night, to hear discourses of Christ; "His mouth is most sweet," Cant. v. 16.†

* Πλυτοικιλος σοφια Θεου, *Multiformis sapientia Dei.* Caryl in Job xi. 6.

† Every discovery of thy truth is, above all, the pleasantest, most ravishing and

Digitized by Google

Secondly, Let us compare this knowledge with all other knowledge, and thereby the excellency of it will farther appear.

1. All other knowledge is natural, but this wholly supernatural, Mat. xi. 27. "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; "neither knoweth any the Father, save the Son, and he to whom- "soever the Son will reveal him." The wiſeſt Heathens could never make a diſcovery of Chriſt by their deepeſt ſearches into nature; the moſt eagle-eyed philoſophers were but children in knowledge, compared with the moſt illiterate Chriſtians.

2. Other knowledge is unattainable by many. All the helps and means in the world would never enable ſome Chriſtians to attain the learned arts and languages; men of the beſt wits, and moſt pregnant parts, are moſt excellent in theſe; but here is the myſtery and excellency of the knowledge of Chriſt, that men of moſt blunt, dull and contemptible parts attain, through the teaching of the Spirit, to this knowledge, in which the more acute and ingenious are utterly blind, Mat. xi. 25. "I thank thee, O Father, "Lord of heaven and earth, becauſe thou haſt hid theſe things "from the wiſe and prudent, and haſt revealed them unto babes." 1 Cor. i. 26, 27. "You ſee your calling, brethren, how that not "many wiſe men after the fleſh, not many mighty, not many noble "are called: but God hath choſen the fooliſh things of the world, "to confound the wiſe," &c.

3. Other knowledge, though you ſhould attain the higheſt degree of it, would never bring you to heaven, being defective and lame both in the integrity of parts, the principal thing, *viz.* Chriſt, being wanting; and in the purity of its nature: for the knowing Heathens grew vain in their imaginations, Rom. i. 21. and in the efficacy and influence of it on the heart and life, *They held the truth in unrighteouſneſs*; their luſts were ſtronger than their light, Rom. i. 18. But this knowledge hath potent influences, changing ſouls into its own image, 2 Cor. iii. 18. and ſo proves a ſaving knowledge unto men, 1 Tim. ii. 4. And thus I have in a few particulars pointed out the tranſcendency of the knowledge of Chriſt.

The uſe of all this I ſhall give you in a few inferences, on which I ſhall not enlarge, the whole being only preliminary to the doctrine of Chriſt; only for the preſent I ſhall hence infer,

INFERENCE I.

* The ſufficiency of the doctrine of Chriſt, to make men wiſe unto ſalvation. Paul deſired to know nothing elſe; and, indeed,

---

delightful, and even invites and offers itſelf to every one of its own accord. What exquiſite pleaſure is there in that, which lies concealed within the inmoſt receſſes of your heart, and is ſhut up, as it were, with locks and bars? *Brightman on Cant.*

* He is completely learned, who has learned the goſpel; but that perſon is quite

Digitized by Google

nothing elſe is of abſolute neceſſity to be known. A little of this knowledge, if ſaving and effectual upon thy heart, will do thy ſoul more ſervice, than all the vain ſpeculation and profound parts that others ſo much glory in. Poor Chriſtian, be not dejected, becauſe thou ſeeſt thyſelf out-ſtript and excelled by ſo many in other parts of knowledge: if thou know Jeſus Chriſt, thou knoweſt enough to comfort and ſave thy ſoul. Many learned philoſophers are now in hell, and many illiterate Chriſtians in heaven.

INFERENCE 2.

If there be ſuch excellency in the knowledge of Chriſt, let it humble all, both ſaints and ſinners, that we have no more of this clear and effectual knowledge in us, notwithſtanding the excellent advantages we have had for it. Sinners, concerning you I may ſigh and ſay with the apoſtle, 1 Cor. xv. 34. "Some have not the "knowledge of Chriſt, I ſpeak this to your ſhame." This, O this is the condemnation. And even for you that are enlightened in this knowledge, how little do you know of Jeſus Chriſt, in compariſon of what you might have known of him? What a ſhame is it, that you ſhould need to be taught the very firſt truths, "when "for the time you might have been teachers of others?" Heb. v. 12, 13, 14. "That your miniſters cannot ſpeak unto you as "ſpiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Chriſt," 1 Cor. iii. 1, 2. O how much time is ſpent in other ſtudies, in vain diſcourſes, frivolous pamphlets, worldly employments? how little in the ſearch and ſtudy of Jeſus Chriſt.

INFERENCE 3.

How ſad is their condition that have a knowledge of Chriſt, and yet as to themſelves it had been better they had never had it!* Many there be that content themſelves with an unpractical, ineffectual, and merely notional knowledge of him; of whom the apoſtle ſaith, "It had been better for them not to have known," 2 Pet. ii. 21. It ſerves only to aggravate ſin and miſery; for though it be not enough to ſave them, yet it puts ſome weak reſtraints upon ſin, which their impetuous luſts breaking down, expoſes them thereby to a greater damnation.

INFERENCE 4.

Fourthly, This may inform us by what rule to judge both miniſters and doctrine. Certainly that is the higheſt commendation of a miniſter, to be an able miniſter of the New Teſtament; not

---

fooliſh and mad, who ſeeks for ſaving knowledge any where elſe; for here is a large field of ſuch knowledge; here all the treaſures of it. *Davenant on Coloſſ.*

* *Vide* Zanch. in Eph. iv. p. 151. *de duplici cognitione Chriſti.*

Digitized by Google

of the letter, but of the Spirit, 2 Cor. iii. 6. He is the best artist, that can most lively and powerfully display Jesus Christ before the people, evidently setting him forth as crucified among them; and that is the best sermon, that is most full of Christ, not of art and language. I know that a holy dialect well becometh Christ's ministers, they should not be rude and careless in language or method; but surely the excellency of a sermon lies not in that, but in the plainest discoveries and liveliest applications of Jesus Christ.

INFERENCE 5.

Let all that mind the honour of religion, or the peace and comfort of their own souls, wholly sequester and apply themselves to the study of Jesus Christ, and him crucified. Wherefore spend we ourselves upon other studies, when all excellency, sweetness, and desirableness is concentered in this one? Jesus Christ is fairer than the children of men, the chiefest among ten thousands, "as "the apple-tree among the trees of the wood;" *Quæ faciunt divisa beatum, in hoc mixta fluunt:* These things which singly ravish and delight the souls of men, are all found conjunctly in Christ. O what a blessed Christ is this!* whom to know is eternal life. From the knowledge of Jesus Christ do bud forth all the fruits of comfort, and that for all seasons and conditions. Hence Rev. xxii. 2. he is called "the tree of life, which bears twelve "manner of fruits, and yields its fruit every month; and the "very leaves of this tree are for healing." In Christ souls have, (1.) All necessaries for food and physic. (2.) All varities of fruits, twelve manner of fruits; a distinct sweetness in this, in that, and in the other attribute, promise, ordinance. (3.) In him are these fruits at all times, he bears fruit every month; there is precious fruit in Jesus Christ, even in the black month; winter fruits as well as summer fruits. O then study Christ, study to know him more *extensively*. There be many excellent things in Christ, that the most eagle-ey'd believer hath not yet seen: Ah! 'tis pity that any thing of Christ should lie hid from his people. Study to know Christ more *intensively*, to get the experimental taste and lively power of his knowledge upon your hearts and affections: This is the knowledge that carries all the sweetness and comfort in it. Christian, I dare appeal to thy [illegible], whether the experimental taste of Jesus Christ, in [illegible] and duties, has not a

* I am sure, (saith a holy one), [illegible] strangers to the weight and worth of the incomparable [illegible] so fresh in excellency every day to those that [illegible] if heaven could furnish as many new Christs [illegible] betwixt him and us; and yet he is one and the same [illegible] an unknown lover, when we love Christ.

higher and sweeter relish than any created enjoyment thou ever tastedst in this world? O then separate, devote, and wholly give thyself, thy time, thy strength to this most sweet transcendent study.

INFERENCE 6.

Lastly, Let me close the whole with a double caution; one to ourselves, who by our callings and professions are the ministers of Christ; another to those that sit under the doctrine of Christ daily.

First, If this doctrine be the most excellent, necessary, fundamental, profound, noble, and comfortable doctrine*, let us then take heed lest, while we study to be exact in other things, we be found ignorant in this. Ye know 'tis ignominious, by the common suffrage of the civilized world, for any man to be unacquainted with his own calling, or not to attend the proper business of it: 'tis our calling, as the Bridegroom's friends, to woo and win souls to Christ, to set him forth to the people as crucified among them, Gal. iii. 1. to present him in all his attractive excellencies, that all hearts may be ravished with his beauty, and charmed into his arms by love: we must also be able to defend the truths of Christ against undermining heretics, to instil his knowledge into the ignorant, to answer the cases and scruples of poor doubting Christians. How many intricate knots have we to untie? What pains, what skill is requisite for such as are employed about our work? And shall we spend our precious time in frivolous controversies, philosophical niceties, dry and barren scholastic notions?† Shall we study every thing but Christ? revolve all volumes but the sacred ones? What is observed even of Bellarmine,‡ that he turned with loathing from school divinity, because it wanted the sweet juice of piety, may be convictive to many among us, who are often too much in love with worse employment than what he is said to loathe. O let the knowledge of Christ dwell richly in us.

Secondly, Let us see that our knowledge of Christ be not a powerless, barren,§ unpractical knowledge: O that, in its passage from

* *Peritum esse, et sine doctrina pietatis periturum:* i. e. To be skill'd in other things, and not in the gospel, is to perish. *Augustin.*

† We are not to study the niceties of rhetoric, so much as plainness and perspicuity; nor are we to speak in a high florid strain, as orators; but with the earnestness and zeal, and sincerity of the apostles; we are not to talk fine things, but what may convince the understanding, and touch the heart.

‡ *Quod a studiis scholasticæ theologiæ averteretur fere nauseabundus; quoniam succo carebant liquidæ pietatis*, Fuligat. in vita Bel.

§ Beware, lest, while the tree of knowledge daily flourishes and thrives, the tree of practice should become barren. Take heed that ye rest not satisfied in the gifts of the Spirit, and begin to think nothing of the Spirit himself, the best gift. *Furd. amb. Sacr.* p. 35.

Digitized by Google

our understanding to our lips, it might powerfully melt, sweeten, and ravish our hearts! Remember, brethren, a holy calling never saved any man, without a holy heart; if our tongues only be *sanctified*, our whole man must be *damned*. "We and our people must "be judged by the same gospel, and stand at the same bar, and be "sentenced to the same terms, and dealt with as severely as any "other men: We cannot think to be saved by our clergy, or to "come off with a *Legit ut clericus*, when there is wanting the "*Credit et vixit ut Christianus*;" as an eminent * Divine speaks. O let the keepers of the vineyard look to, and keep their own vineyard: we have a heaven to win or lose, as well as others.

Thirdly, Let us take heed that we withhold not our knowledge of Christ in unrighteousness from the people. O that our lips may disperse knowledge and feed many. Let us take heed of the napkin, remembering the day of account is at hand†. Remember, I beseech you, the *relations* wherein you stand, and the obligations resulting thence: Remember, the great Shepherd gave himself for, and gave you to the flock; your time, your gifts are not yours, but God's; remember the pinching wants of souls, who are perishing for want of Christ; and if their tongues do not, yet their necessities do bespeak us, as they did Joseph, Gen. xlvii. 15. "Where-"fore should we die in thy presence? Give us food, that we may live "and not die." Even the sea monsters draw forth their breasts to their young ones, and shall we be cruel! cruel to souls! Did Christ not think it too much to sweat blood, yea, to die for them? and shall we think it much to watch, study, preach, pray, and do what we can for their salvation? O let the same mind be in you which was also in Christ!

Secondly, To the people that sit under the doctrine of Christ daily, and have the light of his knowledge shining round about them.

First, Take heed ye do not reject and despise this light. This may be done two ways: *First*, When you despise the means of knowledge by slight and low esteems of it. Surely, if you thus reject knowledge, God will reject you for it, Hos. iv. 6. It is a despising of the richest gift that ever Christ gave to the church; and however it be a contempt and slight that begins low, and seems only to vent itself upon the weak parts, in artificial discourses, and untaking tones and gestures of the speakers; yet,

* He approves himself a clerk,—but he neither believes nor lives as a Christian. Gildas Salvianus, *p.* 27.

† We may apply to ministers what Tacitus speaks of magistrates, *Ita nati estis, ut bona malaque vestra ad rempublicam pertineant*, *i. e.* On your good or bad conduct depends the good or ill of society.

Digitized by Google

believe it, it is a daring sin that flies higher than you are aware, Luke x. 16. "He that despiseth you, despiseth me; and he that "despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me." *Secondly*, You despise the knowledge of Christ, when you despise the directions and loving constraints of that knowledge; when you refuse to be guided by your knowledge, your light and your lusts contest and struggle within you. O it is sad when your lusts master your light. You sin not as the Heathens sin, who know not God; but when you sin, you must slight and put by the notices of your own consciences, and offer violence to your own convictions. And what sad work will this make in your souls? How soon will it lay your consciences waste?

Secondly, Take heed that you rest not satisfied with that knowledge of Christ you have attained, but grow on towards perfection. It is the pride and ignorance of many professors, when they have got a few raw and indigested notions, to swell with self-conceit of their excellent attainments. And it is the sin, even of the best of saints, when they see *(veritas in profundo)* how deep the knowledge of Christ lies, and what pains they must take to dig for it, to throw by the shovel of duty, and cry, *Dig we cannot*. To your work, Christians, to your work; let not your candle go out: sequester yourselves to this study, look what intercourses, and correspondences are betwixt the two worlds; what communion soever God and souls maintain, it is in this way: count all, therefore, but dross in comparison of that excellency which is in the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

SERMON II.

Sets forth CHRIST in his essential and primeval GLORY.

PROV. viii. 30.

Then was I by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him.

THESE words are a part of that excellent commendation of wisdom, by which in this book Solomon intends two things; *first*, Grace or holiness, Prov. iv. 7. "Wisdom is the principal "thing." *Secondly*, *Jesus Christ*, the fountain of that grace: and look, as the former is renowned for its excellency, Job xxviii. 14, 15. so the latter, in this context, wherein the Spirit of God des-

Digitized by Google

cribes the moſt bleſſed ſtate of Jeſus Chriſt, the wiſdom of the Father, from thoſe eternal delights he had with his Father, before his aſſumption of our nature: "Then was I by him," *&c.* that long *Evum* was wholly ſwallowed up, and ſpent in unſpeakable delights and pleaſures. Which delights were twofold, (1.) The Father and Son delighted one in another (from which delights the Spirit is not here excluded) without communicating that their joy to any other, for no creature did then exiſt ſave in the mind of God, verſe 30. (2.) They delighted in the ſalvation of men, in the proſpect of that work, though not yet extant, verſe 31. My preſent buſineſs lies in the former, *viz.* the mutual delights of the Father and Son, one with and in another; the account whereof we have in the text; wherein conſider,

1. The glorious condition of the non-incarnated Son of God, deſcribed by the perſon with whom his fellowſhip was, "Then "was I by him," or with him; ſo with him as never was any, in his very boſom, John i. 18. the only begotten Son was in the boſom of the Father; an expreſſion of the greateſt dearneſs and intimacy in the world; as if he ſhould ſay, wrapt up in the very ſoul of his Father, emboſomed in God.

2. This fellowſhip is illuſtrated by a metaphor, wherein the Lord will ſtoop to our capacities, (as "One brought up with "him") the Hebrew word* אמון [*Amon*] is ſometimes rendered a *cunning workman*, or *curious artiſt*, as in Cant. vii. 1. which is the ſame word. And indeed Chriſt ſhewed himſelf ſuch an artiſt in the creation of the world; "For all things were made by him, "and without him there was nothing made, that was made," John i. 3. But Montanus, and others, render it *nutricius*; and ſo Chriſt is here compared to a delightful child, ſporting before its Father: the Hebrew root† שחק [*Shachak*,] which our tranſlation renders "rejoicing before him," ſignifies *to laugh, play*, or *rejoice*; ſo that, look as parents delight to ſee their children ſporting before them, ſo did the Father delight in beholding this darling of his boſom.

3. This delight is farther amplified by the perpetuity, and uninterruptedneſs thereof; "I was day by day his delights, rejoicing "always before him."‡ Theſe delights of the Father and the

---

* [*Amon*] Signifies a *Skilful Artiſt*; he is pleaſed to aſſume this character, in order to ſhew men, that their converſion is not owing to any ſtrength of their own, but is the work of this ſkilful Artiſt. *Brightman on Cant.* i. 26.

† [*Shachak*] *Ridere*, to laugh; *ludere*, to ſport; *lætari*, to rejoice; ανθρωποπαθως, *after the manner of men*; he compares himſelf to a pleaſant child, ſtanding before his father. *Luvat.* on this place.

‡ [*Yom, Yom Meſhacheketh*] continually rejoicing.

Digitized by Google

Son one in another, knew not a moment's interruption, or diminution: thus did these great and glorious persons mutually let forth their fullest pleasure and delight, each into the heart of the other; they lay as it were emboſomed one in another, entertaining themſelves with delights and pleaſures ineffable, and unconceivable. Hence we obſerve,

Doct. *That the condition and ſtate of Jeſus Chriſt before his incarnation, was a ſtate of the higheſt and moſt unſpeakable delight and pleaſure, in the enjoyment of his Father.*

John tells us he was in the boſom of his Father:* to lie in the boſom is the poſture of deareſt love, John xiii. 23. "Now there "was leaning on Jeſus' boſom one of his diſciples whom Jeſus "loved:" but Chriſt did not lean upon the Father's boſom, as that diſciple did on his, but lay in it: and therefore, in Iſa. xliii. 1. the Father calls him, "Mine elect in whom my ſoul delight-"eth;" which is † variouſly rendered; the Septuagint, *quem ſuſtepit*, whom my ſoul takes, or wraps up: others, *complacuit*, one that highly pleaſes and delights my very ſoul: and, 2 Cor. viii. 9. he is ſaid, in this eſtate, wherein I am now deſcribing him, to be *rich*: and, Phil. ii. 7. "To be equal with God, and to be in the form of God," (i. e.) to have all the glory and enſigns of the majeſty of God; and the riches which he ſpeaks of, was no leſs than all that God the Father hath, John xvi. 14. "All "that the Father hath is mine:" and what he now hath in his exalted ſtate, is the ſame he had before his humiliation, John xvii. 5. Now, to ſketch out (as we are able) the unſpeakable felicity of that ſtate of Chriſt, whilſt he lay in that bleſſed boſom, I ſhall conſider it three ways, negatively, poſitively, and comparatively.

1. Let us conſider that ſtate negatively, by removing from it all thoſe degrees of abaſement and ſorrow which his incarnation brought him under: as,

Firſt, He was not then abaſed to the condition of a creature, which was a low ſtep indeed, and that which upon the matter undid him in point of reputation: for by this (ſaith the apoſtle) he "made himſelf of no reputation," Phil. ii. 7. it emptied him of his glory. For God to be made man, is ſuch an abaſement as none

* John i. 18. Here is inſinuating, metaphorically, the intimate communion of the Son of God with the Father, which conſiſts in eternal generation, in the ſtricteſt oneneſs or unity of nature, in the moſt ardent love, and in communication of the moſt ſecret affairs. *Gloſſ.*

† Hieron. *Quem approbat*, i. e. Whom my ſoul approves. Pagninus & Montanus, *Complacuit animæ meæ*, i. e. One that highly delights my ſoul. The Septuagint, *Quem ſuſcepit anima mea*, i. e. Whom my ſoul takes or wraps up.

Digitized by Google

can expreſs: but then not only to appear in true fleſh, but alſo in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh, as, Rom. viii. 3. O what is this!

Secondly, Chriſt was not under the law in this eſtate. I confeſs it was no diſparagement to Adam in the ſtate of innocency, to angels in their ſtate of glory, to be under law to God; but it was an unconceivable abaſement to the abſolute independent Being to come under law: yea, not only under the obedience, but alſo under the malediction and curſe of the law, Gal. iv. 4. "But when the "fulneſs of time was come, God ſent forth his Son, made of a "woman, made under the law."

Thirdly, In this ſtate he was not liable to any of thoſe ſorrowful conſequents and attendants of that frail and feeble ſtate of humanity, which he afterwards aſſumed, with the nature. As, (1.) He was unacquainted with griefs: there was no ſorrowing or ſighing in that boſom where he lay, though afterwards he became "a man "of ſorrows and acquainted with grief," Iſa. liii. 3. "A man of "ſorrows," as if he had been conſtituted and made up of pure and unmixed ſorrows; every day converſing with griefs, as with his intimate companions and acquaintance. (2.) He was never pinched with poverty and wants, while he continued in that boſom, as he was afterwards, when he ſaid, "The foxes have holes, "and the birds of the air have neſts, but the Son of man hath "not where to lay his head," Mat. viii. 20. Ah bleſſed Jeſus! thou needeſt not to have wanted a place to have lain thine head, hadſt thou not left that boſom for my ſake.* (3.) He never underwent reproach and ſhame in that boſom, there was nothing but glory and honour reflected upon him by his Father, though afterwards he was deſpiſed, and rejected of men, Iſa. liii. 3. His Father never looked upon him without ſmiles and love, delight and joy, though afterwards he became a reproach of men, and deſpiſed of the people, Pſalm xxii. 6. (4.) His holy heart was never offended with an impure ſuggeſtion or temptation of the Devil; all the while he lay in that boſom of peace and love, he never knew what it was to be aſſaulted with temptations, to be beſieged and battered upon by unclean ſpirits, as he did afterwards, Mat. iv. 1. "Then was Jeſus led up of the Spirit into the wilderneſs "to be tempted of the Devil." It was for our ſakes that he ſubmitted to thoſe exerciſes of ſpirit, "to be in all points tempted

* He that *was in the boſom of his Father*; an expreſſion ſhewing the intimate, cloſe, and ſecret delight and love he had from the Father. How unſpeakable is it, that he ſhould deprive himſelf of the ſenſe of it? to put himſelf, as it were, out of heaven into hell? this is deeper love than ever we can imagine or conceive: No wonder, the apoſtle calls it περισσευων [*periſſeuon*], and υπερπερισσευων [*hyperpuiſſeuon*] the unſearchable riches of grace; we are never able to go to the bottom of it, but ſtill there is more grace and love behind. *Mr Anth. Burgeſs, lect. on John* xvii. *p.* 503.

Digitized by Google

" like as we are, that he might be unto us a merciful and faith-" ful High-prieſt," Heb. iv. 15. (5.) He was never ſenſible of pains and tortures in ſoul or body, there were no ſuch things in that bleſſed boſom where he lay, though afterwards he groaned and ſweat under them, Iſa. liii. 5. The Lord embraced him from eternity, but never wounded him till he ſtood in our place and room. (6.) There were no hidings or withdrawings of his Father from him; there was not a cloud from eternity upon the face of God, till *Jeſus Chriſt* had left that boſom. It was a new thing to Chriſt to ſee frowns in the face of his Father; a new thing for him to cry, " My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?" Mat. xxvii. 46. (7.) There were never any impreſſions of his Father's wrath upon him, as there were afterwards: God never delivered ſuch a bitter cup into his hands before, as that was, Mat. xxvi. 39. *Laſtly*, There was no death, to which he was ſubject, in that boſom. All theſe things were new things to Chriſt; he was above them all, till for our ſakes he voluntarily ſubjected himſelf unto them. Thus you ſee what that ſtate was not.

2. Let us conſider it *poſitively*, what it was, and gueſs by ſome particular conſiderations (for indeed we can but gueſs) at the glory of it; as, (1.) We cannot but conceive it to be a ſtate of matchleſs happineſs, if we conſider the perſons enjoying and delighting in each other: he was with God, John i. 1. God, you know, is the fountain, ocean and centre of all delights and joys; Pſal. xvi. 11. " In thy preſence is fulneſs of joy." To be wrapt up in the ſoul and boſom of all delights, as Chriſt was, muſt needs be a ſtate tranſcending apprehenſion; to have the fountain of love and delight letting out itſelf ſo immediately, and fully, and everlaſtingly, upon this only begotten darling of his ſoul, ſo as it never did communicate itſelf to any; judge what a ſtate of tranſcendent felicity this muſt be. Great perſons have great delights.

(2.) Or if we conſider the intimacy, dearneſs, yea, oneneſs of thoſe great perſons one with another: the nearer the union, the ſweeter the communion. Now Jeſus Chriſt was not only near and dear to God, but one with him; " I and my Father are one," John x. 30. one in nature, will, love and delight. There is indeed a moral union of ſouls among men by love, but this was a natural oneneſs; no child is ſo one with his father, no huſband ſo one with the wife of his boſom, no friend ſo one with his friend, no ſoul ſo one with its body, as Jeſus Chriſt and his Father were one. O what matchleſs delights muſt neceſſarily flow from ſuch a bleſſed union!

(3.) Conſider again the purity of that delight with which the bleſſed Father and Son embraced each other; the beſt creature-delights one in another, are mixed, debaſed, and allayed; if there

Digitized by Google

be ſomething raviſhing and engaging, there is alſo ſomething cloying and diſtaſting. The purer any delight is, the more excellent. Now, there are no chryſtal ſtreams flowing ſo purely from the fountain, no beams of light ſo unmixed from the ſun, as the loves and delights of theſe holy and glorious perſons were: the holy, holy, holy Father embraced the thrice holy Son with a moſt holy delight and love.

(4.) Conſider the conſtancy of this delight: it was from everlaſting, as in verſe 23. and from eternity; it never ſuffered one moment's interruption. The overflowing fountain of God's delight and love never ſtopped its courſe, never ebbed; but as he ſpeaks in the text, "I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before "him." Once more, conſider the fulneſs of that delight, the perfection of that pleaſure; *I was delights:* ſo the word is in its original; not only plural, *delights*, all *delights*, but alſo in the abſtract, *delight* itſelf: as afterwards from the abundance of his ſorrows, he was ſtiled, a man of ſorrows; ſo here, from the fulneſs of his delights: as though you ſhould ſay, even conſtituted and made up of pleaſure and delight.

3. Once more, let us conſider it *comparatively*, and this ſtate will yet appear more glorious, comparing it with either the choiceſt delights that one creature takes in another, or that God takes in the creature, or that the creatures take in God: meaſure theſe immenſe delights betwixt the Father and his Son, by either of theſe lines, and you ſhall find them infinitely ſhort: For, (1.) Though the delights that creatures take in each other, be ſometimes a great delight; ſuch was Jacob's delight in Benjamin, whoſe life is ſaid *to be bound up in the lad's life*, a dear and high expreſſion, Gen. xliv. 30. Such was that of Jonathan in David, whoſe ſoul was knit with his ſoul, "and he loved him as his own ſoul," 1 Sam. xiii. 1. and ſuch is the delight of one friend in another; "there is a friend that is as a man's own ſoul," Deut. xiii. 6. yet all this is but creature-delight, and can in no particular equal the delights betwixt the Father and the Son; for this is but a finite delight, according to the meaſure and abilities of creatures, but that is infinite, ſuitable to the infinite perfection of the divine Being: this is always mixed, that perfectly pure. (2.) Or if you compare it with the delight that God takes in the creatures; it is confeſſed that God takes great delight in ſome creatures. "The Lord "takes pleaſure in his ſaints, he rejoices over them with ſinging! "and reſteth in his love," Zeph. iii. 17. Iſa. lxii. 5. But yet there is a great difference betwixt his delight in creatures, and his delights in Chriſt; for all his delight in the ſaints is *ſecondary*, and for Chriſt's ſake; but his delights in Chriſt are *primary*, and for his own ſake: we are accepted in the beloved, Eph. i. 6. he is be-

Digitized by Google

loved, and accepted for himself. (3.) To conclude, compare it once more with the delights that the best of creatures take in God, and Christ, and it must be confessed that is a choice delight, and a transcendent love, with which they love and delight in him;* Psal. lxxiii. 25. "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and on "earth there is none I desire besides thee." What pangs of love, what raptures of delight did the spouse express to Christ? "O thou "whom my soul loveth!" But surely our delight in God is no perfect rule to measure his delight in Christ by: for our love to God (at the best) is still imperfect; that is the burden and constant complaint of saints, but this is perfect; ours is inconstant, up and down, ebbing and flowing, but this is constant. So then, to conclude, the condition and state of Jesus Christ before his incarnation, was a state of the highest and matchless delight, in the enjoyment of his Father. The uses follow.

Use of Information.

INFERENCE I.

What an astonishing act of love was this then, for the Father to give the delight, the darling of his soul, out of his very bosom, for poor sinners! all tongues must needs pause and falter, that attempt the expression of his grace, expressions being here swallowed up: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten "Son," John iii. 16. Here is a *sic* without a *sicut*; so loved them: how did he love them? nay, here you must excuse the tongues of angels; which of us would deliver a child, the child of our delights, an only child, to death for the greatest inheritance in the world? what tender parent can endure a parting pull with such a child? when Hagar was taking her last leave (as she thought) of her Ishmael, Gen. xxi. 16. the text saith, "she went and sat "her down over against him, a good way off: for she said, Let "me not see the death of the child. And she sat over-against "him, and lift up her voice, and wept:" though she were none of the best of mothers, nor he the best of children, yet she could not give up the child. O it was hard to part! what an outcry did David make, even for an Absalom! wishing he had died for him. What a hole (as I may say) hath the death of some children made in the hearts of some parents, which will never be closed up in this world? yet surely, never did any child lie so close to a parent's

* *Amo te, Domine, plusquam meos, plusquam mea, plusquam me*, i. e. O Lord, I love thee above all my relations, above all that is mine, above myself. *Bern.*

Suppose (saith one) there were a hell betwixt me and Christ, and Christ should say, put in thy foot and come through, or thou shalt have none of me, would I not do it.

Digitized by Google

heart, as Christ did to his Father's; and yet he willingly parts with him, though his only one, the Son of his delights, and that to death, a curſed death, for ſinners, for the worſt of ſinners. *O miranda Dei philanthropia!* O the admirable love of God to men! matchleſs love! a love paſt finding out! Let all men, therefore, in the buſineſs of their redemption, give equal glory to the Father with the Son, John v. 23. if the Father had not loved thee, he had never parted with ſuch a Son for thee.

INFERENCE 2.

From one wonder let our ſouls turn to another, for they are now in the midſt of wonders: adore, and be for ever aſtoniſhed at the love of Jeſus Chriſt to poor ſinners; that ever he ſhould conſent to leave ſuch a boſom, and the ineffable delights that were there, for ſuch poor worms as we are. Oh the heights, depths, lengths, and breadths of unmeaſurable love! O ſee, Rom. v. 6, 7, 8. read, and wonder; how is the love of Chriſt commended in raviſhing circumſtances to poor ſinners!* You would be loth to leave a creature's boſom, a comfortable dwelling, a fair eſtate for the beſt friend in the world; your ſouls are loth to leave their bodies, though they have no ſuch great content there; but which of you, if ever you found by experience what it is to be in the boſom of God by divine communion, would be perſuaded to leave ſuch a boſom for all the good that is in the world? and yet Jeſus Chriſt who was embraced in that boſom after another manner than ever you were acquainted with, freely left it, and laid down the glory and riches he enjoyed there, for your ſakes; and as the Father loved him; even ſo (believers) hath he loved you, John xvii. 22. What manner of love is this! Who ever loved as Chriſt loves? Who ever denied himſelf for Chriſt, as Chriſt denied himſelf for us?

INFERENCE 3.

Hence we are informed, That intereſt in Jeſus Chriſt is the true way to all ſpiritual preferment in heaven. Do you covet to be in the heart, in the favour and delight of God? Get intereſt in Jeſus Chriſt, and you ſhall preſently be there. What old Iſrael ſaid of the children of his beloved Joſeph, Thy children are my children; the ſame God ſaith of all the dear children of Chriſt, Gen. xlviii. 5, 9. You ſee among men, all things are carried by intereſt:

* It is admirable that Chriſt ſhould not only put himſelf out of comfort, but alſo from the enjoyment of that manifeſted glory and honour he might have retained to himſelf; for he prayeth here for that glory which he had with the Father from the beginning of the world: he had it in *right*, but not in *poſſeſſion*: he voluntarily diveſted himſelf of that to accompliſh our redemption. *Burgeſs on John* xvii. 19.

Digitized by Google

persons rise in this world as they are befriended; preferment goes by favour: So 'tis in heaven, persons are preferred according to their interest in the beloved, Eph. i. 9. Christ is the great favourite in heaven: his image upon your souls, and his name in your prayers, makes both accepted with God.

INFERENCE 4.

How worthy is Jesus Christ of all our love and delights? You see how infinitely the Father delighteth in him, how he ravishes the heart of God; and shall he not ravish our hearts? I present you a Christ this day, able to ravish any soul that will but view and consider him. O that you did but see this lovely Lord Jesus Christ! Then would you go home sick of love: surely he is a drawing Saviour, John xii. 32. Why do ye lavish away your precious affections upon vanity: None but Christ is worthy of them: when you spend your precious affections upon other objects, what is it but to dig for dross with golden mattocks? *The Lord direct our hearts into the love of Christ.* O that our hearts, loves and delights did meet and concentre with the heart of God in this most blessed object! O let him that left God's bosom for you, be embosomed by you, though yours be nothing to God's; he that left God's bosom for you, deserves yours.

INFERENCE 5.

If Christ be the beloved darling of the Father's soul, think what a grievous and insufferable thing it is to the heart of God, to see his dear Son despised, slighted, and rejected by sinners: verily, there is no such cut to the heart of God in the whole world. Unbelievers trample upon God's darling, tread under foot him that eternally lay in his bosom, Heb. x. 29. Smite the Apple of his eye, and how God will bear this, that parable, Mat. xxi. 37, to 40, will inform you; surely he will miserably destroy such wretched sinners. If you would study to do God the greatest despight, there is none like this. What a dismal word is that; 1 Cor. xvi. 22. "If any "man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Ma-"ranatha," (i. e.) let the great curse of God lie upon that man till the Lord come. O sinners! you shall one day know the price of this sin; you shall feel what it is to despise a Jesus, that is able to compel love from the hardest heart. O that you would slight him no more! O that this day your hearts might fall in love with him! I tell you, if you would set your love to sale, none bids so fair for it as Christ.

2. *Use of Exhortation*

1. To saints: If Christ lay eternally in this bosom of love, and yet was content to forsake and leave it for your sakes; then, (1.) Be you

Digitized by Google

ready to forſake and leave all the comforts you have on earth for Chriſt: famous Galleacius left all for this enjoyment. Moſes left all the glory of Egypt: Peter, and the other Apoſtles left all, Luke xviii. 28. But what have we to leave for Chriſt in compariſon of what he left for us? Surely Chriſt is the higheſt pattern of ſelf-denial in the world. (2.) Let this confirm your faith in prayer: If he, that has ſuch an intereſt in the heart of God, intercede with the Father for you, then never doubt of audience and acceptance with him; ſurely you ſhall be accepted through the beloved, Eph. i. 6. Chriſt was never denied any thing that he aſked, John xi. 42. the Father hears him always; though you are not worthy, Chriſt is, and he ever lives to make interceſſion for you, Heb. vii. 25.

(3.) Let this encourage thy heart, O ſaint, in a dying hour, and not only make thee patient in death, but in a holy manner impatient till thou be gone; for whither is thy ſoul now going, but to that boſom of love whence Chriſt came? John xvii. 24. "Father, I will that they alſo whom thou haſt given me, be with "me where I am:" and where is he but in that boſom of glory and love where he lay before the world was? ver. 5. O then let every believer encourage his ſoul; comfort ye one another with theſe words, I am leaving the boſom of a creature, I am going to the boſom of God.

2. To ſinners, exhorting them to embrace the boſom-ſon of God: Poor Wretches! Whatever you are, or have been; whatever guilt or diſcouragement at preſent you lie under; embrace Chriſt, who is freely offered to you, and you ſhall be as dear to God as the holieſt and moſt eminent believer in the world: but if you ſtill continue to deſpiſe and neglect ſuch a Saviour, ſorer wrath is treaſured up for you than other ſinners, even ſomething worſe than dying without mercy, Heb. x. 28. O that theſe diſcoveries and overtures of Chriſt may never come to ſuch a fatal iſſue with any of your ſouls, in whoſe eyes his glory hath been this day opened!

Digitized by Google

SERMON III.

Opens the Covenant of Redemption betwixt the Father and the Redeemer.

ISA. liii. 12.

Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors, and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

IN this chapter, the gospel seems to be epitomized; the subject-matter of it is the death of Christ, and the glorious issue thereof: by reading of it, the Eunuch of old, and many Jews since, have been converted to Christ. Christ is here considered *absolutely*, and *relatively*; Absolutely, and so his innocency is industriously vindicated, ver. 9. Though he suffered grievous things, yet not for his own sins, "for he had done no violence, neither "was any deceit in his mouth;" but relatively considered in the capacity of a surety for us: so the justice of God is so fully vindicated in his sufferings; ver. 6. "The Lord hath laid upon him the "iniquity of us all." How he came to sustain this capacity and relation of a surety for us, is in these verses plainly asserted to be by his compact and agreement with his Father,* before the worlds were made, verse 10, 11, 12.

In this verse we have, 1. His work. 2. His reward. 3. The respect or relation of each to the other. (1.) His work, which was indeed a hard work, *to pour out his soul unto death*, aggravated by the companions, with whom, *being numbered with transgressors*; the capacity in which, bearing all the sins of the elect, "he bare the "sins of many;" and by the manner of his bearing it, *viz.* meekly, and forgivingly, "he made intercession for the transgressors;" This was his work. (2.) The reward or fruit which is promised him for this work, "therefore will I divide him a portion with "the great, and he will divide the spoil with the strong;" wherein is a plain allusion to conquerors in war, for whom are reserved the richest garments, and most honourable captives to follow the

* *Norton's Orthodox Evangelist*, p. 41. The call of the Lord Jesus unto office, includes election on the Father's part, and acceptation on the Mediator's part, and is set down after the manner of mutual transaction between God and Christ; whereby he was designed thereunto, as it were by way of covenant. If his soul should set itself an offering for sin, (for so, according to the original, do good authors read the text) "he shall see his seed, prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand," verse 10.

Digitized by Google

conqueror, as an addition to his magnificence and triumph; these were wont to come after them in chains, Isa xlv. 14. see Judges v. 3. (3.) The respect or relation betwixt that work and this triumph: some will have this work to have no other relation to that glory, than a mere antecedent to a consequent: others give it the respect and relation of a meritorious cause to a reward. 'Tis well observed by Dr Featly, that the Hebrew particle לכן which we render *therefore*, noting order, is not worth so much contention about it, whether it be the order of *casuality*, or mere *antecedency*; neither do I foresee any absurdity in calling Christ's exaltation the reward and fruit of his humiliation: however, 'tis plain, whether one or other, 'tis that the Father here agrees and promises to give him, if he will undertake the redemption of the elect, by pouring out his soul unto death; of all which this is the plain result:

Doct. *That the business of man's salvation was transacted upon covenant-terms, betwixt the Father and the Son, from all eternity.*

I would not here be mistaken, as though I were now to treat of the covenant of grace, made in Christ betwixt God and us; it is not the covenant of grace, but of redemption, I am now to speak to, which differs from the covenant of grace, in regard of the *federates*; in this, it is God the Father, and Jesus Christ, that mutually covenant; in that, it is God and man: they differ, also in the *preceptive* part; in this it is required of Christ that he should shed his blood, in that it is required of us that we believe. They also differ in their *promises*; in this, God promises to Christ a name above every name, ample dominion from sea to sea; in that, to us, grace and glory: so that these are two distinct covenants.*

The substance of this covenant of redemption is, dialogue-wise, expressed to us in Isa. xlix.† where (as divines have well observed) Christ begins, at the first and second verses, and shews his commission, telling his Father, how he had both called, and prepared him for the work of redemption; *The Lord hath called me from the womb—he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword, and made me a polished shaft*, &c. *q. d.* by reason of that superabundant measure of the spirit of wisdom and power wherewith I am anointed and filled; my doctrine shall, as a sword, pierce the hearts of sinners; yea, like an arrow, drawn to the head, strike deep into souls standing at a great distance from God and godliness.

* The author writes in the popular style of the last age. However, later writers, for very important reasons, have rejected the distinction as not only inaccurate, but as pregnant with consequences highly inimical to the sovereignty of grace. See *Witsius de Oeconomia Fœderum*, *Boston's View of the Covenant of Grace*, and *Gib's Sacred Contemplations*. Editor.

† *Vide* Goodwin's Triumph of Faith.

Digitized by Google

Having told God how ready, and fit he was for his ſervice, he will know of him what reward he ſhall have for his work, for he reſolves his blood ſhall not be undervalued; hereupon, verſe 3. the Father offers him the elect of Iſrael for his reward, bidding low at firſt (as they that make bargains uſe to do) and only offers him that ſmall remnant, ſtill intending to bid higher: but Chriſt will not be ſatisfied with theſe, he values his blood higher than ſo: therefore, in verſe 4. he is brought in complaining, "I have la-"boured in vain, and ſpent my ſtrength for nought," *q. d.* This is but a ſmall reward for ſo great a ſuffering as I muſt undergo; my blood is much more worth than this comes to, and will be ſufficient to redeem all the elect diſperſed among the iſles of the Gentiles, as well as the loſt ſheep of the houſe of Iſrael. Hereupon the Father comes up higher, and tells him, he intends to reward him better than ſo; and therefore, verſe 6. ſays, "It is a light "thing that thou ſhouldſt be my ſervant to raiſe up the tribes of "Jacob, and to reſtore the preſerved of Iſrael: I will alſo give "thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayeſt be my ſalva-"tion to the ends of the earth." Thus is the treaty carried on betwixt them, tranſacting it after the manner of men.

Now, to open this great point, we will here conſider, (1.) The perſons tranſacting one with another. (2.) The buſineſs tranſacted. (3.) The quality and manner of the tranſaction, which is federal. (4.) The articles to which they agree. (5.) How each perſon performs his engagement to the other. And, *Laſtly*, The antiquity or eternity of this covenant-tranſaction.

(1.) The perſons tranſacting and dealing with each other in this covenant; and indeed they are great perſons, God the Father, and God the Son; the former as a *Creditor*, and the latter as a *Surety*. The Father ſtands upon ſatisfaction, the Son engages to give it. If it be demanded, why the Father and the Spirit might not as well have treated upon our redemption, as the Father and Son! It is anſwered, Chriſt is the natural Son of God, and therefore fitteſt to make us the adopted ſons of God. Chriſt alſo is the middle perſon in the Trinity, and therefore fitteſt to be the mediator and middle perſon betwixt us and God.* The Spirit hath another office aſſigned him, even to apply, as Chriſt's vicegerent, the redemption deſigned by the Father, and purchaſed by the Son for us.

(2.) The buſineſs tranſacted betwixt them; and that was the redemption and recovery of all God's elect: our eternal happineſs lay now before them, our deareſt and everlaſting concerns were now in their hands: the elect (though not yet in being) are here

* *Vide* Robert's *Medulla Bib.* p. 1577, *et Lyſ. Theſ.* p. 83, 84.

Digitized by Google

conſidered as exiſtent, yea, and as fallen, miſerable, forlorn creatures: † How theſe may again be reſtored to happineſs *(ſalva juſtitia Dei)* without prejudice to the honour, juſtice and truth of God; this, this is the buſineſs that lay before them.

(3.) For the manner, or quality of the tranſaction, it was *federal*, or of the nature of a covenant; it was by mutual engagements and ſtipulations, each perſon undertaking to perform his part, in order to our recovery.

We find each perſon undertaking for himſelf by ſolemn promiſe; the Father promiſeth that he will "hold his hand, and "keep him," Iſa. xlii. 6. The Son promiſeth he will obey his Father's call to ſuffering, and "not be rebellious," Iſa. l. 5. And, having promiſed, each holds the other to his engagement. The Father ſtands upon the ſatisfaction promiſed him; and, when the payment was making, he will not abate him one farthing, Rom. viii. 32. "God ſpared not his own Son," *i. e.* he abated nothing of the full price he was to have at his hands for us.

And, as the Father ſtood ſtrictly upon the terms of the covenant, ſo did Chriſt alſo; John xvii. 45. "I have glorified thee "on earth, (ſaith he to the Father) I have finiſhed the work "thou gaveſt me to do; and now, Father, glorify me with thine "own ſelf." As if he had ſaid, Father, the work is done, now where is the wages I was promiſed? I call for glory as my due, as much my due as the hire of the labourer is his due, when his work is done.

4. More particularly; we will next conſider the articles to which they do both agree; or, what it is that each perſon doth for himſelf promiſe to the other. And, to let us ſee how much the Father's heart is engaged in the ſalvation of poor ſinners, there are five things which he promiſeth to do for Chriſt, if he will undertake that work.

Firſt, He promiſeth to inveſt him, and anoint him to a threefold office, anſwerable to the miſery that lay upon the elect, as ſo many bars to all communion with, and enjoyment of God; for, if ever man be reſtored to that happineſs, the blindneſs of his mind muſt be cured, the guilt of ſin expiated, and his captivity to ſin led captive: anſwerably, Chriſt muſt, "of God, be made unto "us, wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification and redemption," 1 Cor. i. 30. And he is made ſo to us as our *Prophet*, *Prieſt*, and

† The external cauſe of that ſatisfaction, which the Father decreed, and the Son made, was the miſerable ſtate we were in, upon the account of our ſins, which juſtly deſerved eternal puniſhment, and bound us over unto it; we being in this forlorn condition, the God of mercy had compaſſion on us, and, for our ſakes, the Son of God underwent all that puniſhment which we deſerved to ſuffer; in order that we might be reſtored to our firſt happineſs. *Synop. purior. Theol.* p. 350.

Digitized by Google

King; but he could not put himself into either of these; for if so, he had acted without commission, and consequently all he did had been invalid; Heb. v. 5. "Christ glorified not himself to be made an "High-priest, but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son." A commission therefore to act authoritatively, in these offices, being necessary to our recovery, the Father engages to him to seal him such a threefold commission.

He promiseth to invest him with an eternal and royal Priesthood, Psal. cx. 4. "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent; Thou "art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec." This Melchisedec being King of Righteousness, and king of *Salem*, that is, *Peace*, had a royal priesthood; and his descent not being reckoned, it had an adumbration of eternity in it, and so was more apt to type and shadow forth the priesthood of Christ than Aaron's was, Heb. vii. 16, 17, 24, 25. as the apostle accommodates them there.

He promiseth moreover to make him a Prophet, and that an extraordinary one, even the Prince of prophets; the chief Shepherd, as much superior to all others, as the sun is to the lesser stars; so you have it, Isa. xlii. 6, 7. "I will give thee for a "light to the Gentiles, to open the blind eyes," *&c.*

And not only so, but to make him king also, and that of the whole empire of the world; so Psal. ii. 6, 7, 8. "Ask of me, and "I will give thee the Heathen for thine inheritance, and the ut-"most ends of the earth for thy possession." Thus he promiseth to qualify and furnish him completely for the work, by his investiture with this threefold office.

Secondly, And forasmuch as he knew it was a hard and difficult work his Son was to undertake, a work that would have broken the backs of all the angels in heaven, and men on earth, had they engaged in it; therefore he promiseth to stand by him, and assist and strengthen him for it: so, Isa. xlii. 5, 6, 7. "I will hold thy "hand," or take hold of thee with my hand, for so it may be rendered, * *i. e.* I will underprop and support thy humanity, when it is even overweighted with the burden that is to come upon it, and ready to sink down under it; for so you know the case stood with him, Mark xiv. 34. and so it was foretold of him, Isa. liii. 7. "He was oppressed," *&c.* and indeed the humanity needed a prop of no less strength than the infinite power of the Godhead: the same promise you have in the first verse also, "Behold my ser-"vant whom I uphold."

Thirdly, He promiseth to crown his work with success, and

* I, whose power is boundless and infinite, will so befriend and support thee, that all thy enemies shall not be able to hurt thee. *Marlot*, on this place.

Digitized by Google

bring it to an happy iſſue, Iſa. liii. 10. "He ſhall ſee his ſeed, he "ſhall prolong his days, and the pleaſure of the Lord ſhall proſ-"per in his hand." He ſhall not begin, and not finiſh; he ſhall not ſhed his invaluable blood upon hazardous terms; but ſhall ſee and reap the ſweet fruits thereof; as the joyful mother forgets her pangs, when ſhe delightfully embraces and kiſſes her living child.

Fourthly, The Father promiſeth to accept him in his work, though millions ſhould eternally periſh, Iſa. xlix. 4. "Surely (ſaith he) "my work is with the Lord." And, verſe 5. "I ſhall be glori-"ous in the eyes of the Lord." His faith had therein reſpect to this compact and promiſe. Accordingly, the Father manifeſts the ſatisfaction he had in him, and in his work, even while he was about it upon the earth, when there came ſuch a "voice from the "excellent glory, ſaying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am "well pleaſed."

Fiftbly, As he engaged to reward him highly for his work, by exalting him to ſingular and ſuper-eminent glory and honour, when he ſhould have diſpatched and finiſhed it. So you read, Pſal. ii. 7. "I will declare the decree; the Lord hath ſaid unto me, Thou "art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." It is ſpoken of the day of his reſurrection, when he had juſt finiſhed his ſufferings. And ſo the apoſtle expounds and applies it, Acts xiii. 32, 33. For then did the Lord wipe away the reproach of his croſs, and inveſted him with ſuch glory, that he looked like himſelf again. As if the Father had ſaid, Now thou haſt again recovered thy glory, and this day is to thee as a new birth-day.

Theſe are the encouragements and rewards propoſed, and promiſed to him by the Father. This was the "joy ſet before him," (as the apoſtle phraſeth it in Heb. xii. 2.) which made him ſo patiently to "endure the croſs, and deſpiſe the ſhame."

And in like manner, Jeſus Chriſt reſtipulates, and gives his engagement to the Father; that, upon theſe terms, he is content to be made fleſh, to diveſt, as it were, himſelf of his glory, to come under the obedience and malediction of the law, and not to refuſe any, the hardeſt ſufferings it ſhould pleaſe his Father to inflict on him. So much is implied in Iſa. l. 5, 6, 7. "The Lord hath open-"ed mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away "back; I gave my back to the ſmiters, and my cheeks to them "that pulled off the hair; I hid not my face from ſhame and ſpit-"ting: For the Lord God will help me, therefore ſhall I not be "confounded; I have ſet my face as a flint, and I know that I "ſhall not be aſhamed." When he ſaith, I was not *rebellious*, מריתי he meaneth, I was moſt heartily willing, and content to

Digitized by Google

accept the terms; for there is a *Meiosis* in the words, and much more is intended than expressed. And the sense of this place is well delivered to us in other terms, Psal. xl. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. "Then "said I, Lo I come, I delight to do thy will, O God, thy law is "within my heart." O see with what a full consent the heart of Christ closeth with the Father's offers and proposals; like some echo, that answers your voice twice or thrice over. So doth Christ here answer his Father's call, "I come, I delight to do thy "will; *yea*, thy law is in my heart." And thus you see the articles to which they both subscribed, or the terms they agreed on.

(5.) I will briefly shew how these articles, and agreements were on both parts, performed, and that precisely and punctually. For, (1.) The Son having thus consented, accordingly he applies himself to the discharge of his work. He took a body, in it fulfilled all righteousness, even to a tittle, Mat. iii. 15. And at last his soul was made an offering for sin, so that he could say as it is, John xvii. 4. "Father, I have glorified thee on earth, I have "finished the work thou gavest me to do." He went through all the parts of his active, and passive obedience, cheerfully and faithfully. (2.) The Father made good his engagements to Christ, all along, with no less faithfulness than Christ did his. He promised to *assist, and hold his hand*, and so he did; Luke xxii. 23. "And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthen-"ing him." That was one of the sorest brunts that ever Christ met with; this was seasonable aid and succour. He promised to accept him in his work, and that he should be glorious in his eyes; so he did: for he not only declared it by a voice from heaven, Luke iii. 22. "Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well "pleased:" But it was fully declared in his resurrection and ascension, which were a full discharge and justification of him. He promised him that "He should see his seed," and so he did; for his very birth-dew was as the dew of the morning; and ever since his blood has been fruitful in the world. He promised gloriously to reward and exalt him; and so he hath, Phil. ii. 9, 10, 11. and that highly and super-eminently, "giving him a name "above every name in heaven and earth." Thus were the articles performed.

(6.) *Lastly*, When was this compact made betwixt the Father and the Son? I answer, it bears date from eternity.* Before this world was made, then were his delights in us, while as yet we had no existence, but only in the infinite mind and purpose of God,

* *Antequam ab omnibus retro seculis tempora fluere inciperent, decrevit Deus hanc nobis salutis gratiam per Christum conferre: i. e.* From all eternity, God decreed to bestow on us the gift of salvation through Jesus Christ.

Digitized by Google

who had decreed this for us in Christ Jesus, as the apostle speaks, 2 Tim. i. 9. What grace was that which was given us in Christ before the world began, but this grace of redemption, which was from everlasting thus contrived and designed for us, in that way which hath been here opened? Then was the council, or consultation of peace betwixt them both, as some take that scripture, Zech. vi. 13.

Next let us apply it to ourselves.

Use 1. The first use that offers itself to us from hence, is *the abundant security that God hath given the elect for their salvation, and that not only in respect of the covenant of grace made with them, but also of this covenant of redemption made with Christ for them; which indeed is the foundation of the covenant of grace.* God's single promise is security enough to our faith, his covenant of grace adds, *ex abundanti*, farther security; but both these viewed as the effects and fruits of this covenant of redemption, make all fast and sure. In the covenant of grace, we question not the performance on God's part, but we are often stumbled at the grand defects on our parts. But when we look to the covenant of redemption, there is nothing to stagger our faith, both the federates being infinitely able and faithful to perform their parts; so that there is no possibility of a failure there. Happy were it, if puzzled and perplexed Christians would turn their eyes from the defects that are in their obedience, to the fulness and completeness of Christ's obedience; and see themselves complete in him, when most lame and defective in themselves.

2. Hence also be informed, *that God the Father, and God the Son, do mutually rely and trust to one another in the business of our redemption.* The Father relies upon the Son for the performance of his part; as it is, Isa. xlii. 1. "Behold my servant, whom I uphold." *Montanus* * turns it, on whom I lean or depend. As if the Father had said, behold what a faithful servant I have chosen, in whom my soul is at rest: I know he will go through with his work, I can depend upon him. And, to speak plain, the Father so far trusted Christ, that upon the credit of his promise to come into the world, and in the fulness of time to become a sacrifice for the elect, he saved all the Old-Testament saints, whose faith also respected a Christ to come; with reference whereto, it is said, Heb. xi. 39, 40. "That they received not the promises, God having provided "some better things for us, that they without us should not be "made perfect," *i. e.* without Jesus Christ manifested in the flesh, in our times; though believed on, as to come in the flesh, in their times. And as the Father trusted Christ, so doth Christ, in like manner, depend upon, and trust his Father. For, having per-

* אתמך בו *Innitur in eo.* Montanus.

Digitized by Google

formed his part, and left the world again, he now trusteth his Father for the accomplishment of that promise made him, Isa. liii. 10. "That he shall see his seed," &c. He depends upon his Father for all the elect that are left behind, yet unregenerated, as well as those already called, that they shall be all preserved unto the heavenly kingdom, according to that, John xvii. 11. "And now I "am no more in the world, but these are in the world: and I "come unto thee: holy Father, keep, through thine own name, "those whom thou hast given me." And can it be imagined, that the Father will fail in his trust, who every way acquitted himself so punctually to the Son? It cannot be.

Use 3. Moreover, hence we infer *the validity and unquestionable success of Christ's intercession in heaven for believers.* You read, Heb. vii. 25. "That he ever lives to make intercession; and, Heb. xii. 24. "That his blood speaks for good things for them." Now, that his blood shall obtain what it pleads in heaven for, is undoubted, and that from the consideration of this covenant of redemption. For here you see that the things he now asks of his Father, are the very same which his Father promised him, and covenanted to give him, before this world was. So that, besides the interest of the person, the very equity of the matter speaks its success, and requires performance. Whatever he asks for us, is as due to him as the wages of the hireling, when the work is ended; if the work be done, and done faithfully, as the Father hath acknowledged it is, then the reward is due, and due immediately; and no doubt but he shall receive it from the hands of a righteous God.

Use 4. Hence, in like manner, you may be informed of *the consistency of grace with full satisfaction to the justice of God.* The apostle, 2 Tim. i. 9. tells us, "We are saved according to his own pur- "pose and grace, which was given us in Jesus Christ before the "world began." *i. e.* According to the gracious terms of this covenant of redemption; and yet you see notwithstanding, how strictly God stands upon satisfaction from Christ: so then, grace to us, and satisfaction to justice, are not so inconsistent as the Socinian adversaries would make them; what was debt to Christ, is grace to us: when you hear men cry out, Here is grace indeed! pay me all, and I will forgive you; remember, how all mouths are stopt with that one text, Rom. iii. 24. "Being justified freely by "his grace;" and yet he adds, "through the redemption that is "in Christ."

Use 5. Again, Hence judge *of the antiquity of the love of God to believers!* what an ancient friend he hath been to us; who loved us, provided for us, and contrived all our happiness, before we were, yea, before the world was. We reap the fruits of this covenant now, the seed whereof was sown from eternity; yea, it is

Digitized by Google

not only ancient, but also most free: no excellencies of ours could engage the love of God; for as yet we were not.

Use 6. Hence judge, *How reasonable it is that believers should embrace the hardest terms of obedience unto Christ, who complied with such hard terms for their salvation:* they were hard and difficult terms indeed, on which Christ received you from the Father's hand; it was, as you have heard, to pour out his soul unto death, or not to enjoy a soul of you. Here you may suppose the Father to say, when driving his bargain with Christ for you:

Father. My Son, here is a company of poor miserable souls, that have utterly undone themselves, and now lie open to my justice! Justice demands satisfaction for them, or will satisfy itself in the eternal ruin of them: What shall be done for these souls? And thus Christ returns.

Son. O my Father, such is my love to, and pity for them, that rather than they shall perish eternally, I will be responsible for them as their Surety: bring in all thy bills, that I may see what they owe thee; Lord, bring them all in, that there may be no after-reckonings with them; at my hand shalt thou require it. I will rather choose to suffer thy wrath than they should suffer it: upon me, my Father, upon me be all their debt.

Father. But, my Son, if thou undertake for them, thou must reckon to pay the last mite, expect no abatements; if I spare them, I will not spare thee.

Son. Content, Father, let it be so; charge it all upon me, I am able to discharge it: and though it prove a kind of undoing to me, though it impoverish all my riches, empty all my treasures, (for so indeed it did, 2 Cor. viii. 9. "Though he was rich, yet for our "sakes he became poor") yet I am content to undertake it. Blush, ungrateful believers, O let shame cover your faces; judge in yourselves now, hath Christ deserved that you should stand with him for trifles, that you should shrink at a few petty difficulties, and complain, this is hard, and that is harsh? O if you knew the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ in this his wonderful condescension for you, you could not do it.

Use 7. Lastly, *How greatly are we all concerned to make it sure to ourselves, that we are of this number which the Father and the Son agreed for before the world was; that we were comprehended in Christ's engagement and compact with the Father?*

Obj. Yea, but you will say, who can know that? there were no witnesses to that agreement.

Sol. Yes, We may know, without ascending into heaven, or prying into unrevealed secrets, that our names were in that covenant, if, (1.) You are believers indeed; for all such the Father then gave to Christ, John xvii. 8. "The men that thou gavest me

Digitized by Google

" (for of them he ſpake immediately before) they have believed " that thou didſt ſend me." (2.) If you ſavingly know God in Jeſus Chriſt, ſuch were given him by the Father, John xvii. 6. " I have manifeſted thy name unto the men thou gaveſt me." By this they are diſcriminated from the reſt, verſe 25. " The world " hath not known thee, but theſe have known," &c. (3.) If you are men and women of another world; John xvii. 16. " They " are not of the world, as I am not of the world." May it be ſaid of you, as of dying men, that you are not men and women for this world, that you are crucified and dead to it, Gal. vi. 14. that you are ſtrangers in it? Heb. xi. 13, 14. (4.) If you keep Chriſt's word, John xvii. 6. " Thine they were, and thou gaveſt " them me; and they have kept thy word." By keeping his word, underſtand the receiving of the word, in its ſanctifying effects and influences into your hearts, and your perſeverance in the profeſſion and practice of it to the end, John xvii. 17. " Sanctify " them through thy truth, thy word is truth." John xv. 7. " If " ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye ſhall aſk what " ye will." Bleſſed and happy is that ſoul upon which theſe bleſſed characters appear, which our Lord Jeſus hath laid ſo cloſe together, within the compaſs of a few verſes, in this xvii. chapter of John. Theſe are the perſons the Father delivered unto Chriſt, and he accepted from the Father, in this bleſſed covenant.

SERMON IV.

Opens the admirable Love of GOD in giving his own SON for us.

JOHN iii. 16.

For God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, &c.

YOU have heard of the gracious purpoſe and deſign of God, to recover poor ſinners to himſelf by Jeſus Chriſt, and how this deſign of love was laid and contrived in the covenant of redemption, whereof we laſt ſpake.

Now, according to the terms of that covenant, you ſhall hear from this ſcripture, how that deſign was by one degree advanced towards its accompliſhment, in God's actual giving or parting with his own Son for us: " God ſo loved the world, that he " gave," &c.

The whole precedent context is ſpent in diſcovering the nature and neceſſity of regeneration, and the neceſſity thereof is in this

Digitized by Google

text urged and inferred from the peculiar reſpect and eye God had upon believers, in giving Chriſt for them; they only reaping all the ſpecial and ſaving benefits and advantages of that gift: "God "ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that "whoſoever believeth in him ſhould not periſh."

In the words are to be conſidered,

1. The original ſpring or fountain of our beſt mercies, the love of God. The love of God is, either *benevolent*, *beneficent*, or *complacential*. His benevolent love, is nothing elſe but his deſire and purpoſe of ſaving, and doing us good; ſo his purpoſe and grace to Jacob is called love, Rom. ix. 13. "Jacob have I loved;" but this being before Jacob was, could conſiſt in nothing elſe but the gracious purpoſe of God towards him. His *beneficent* love, is his actual doing good to the perſons beloved, or his beſtowing the effects of his love upon us, according to that purpoſe. His *complacential* love, is nothing elſe but that delight and ſatisfaction he finds in beholding the fruits and workings of that grace in us, which he firſt intended for us, and then actually collated or beſtowed on us. This love of benevolence, is that which I have opened to you, under the former head, God's compact with Chriſt about us, or his deſign to ſave us on the articles and terms therein ſpecified.

The love of *beneficence*, is that which this ſcripture ſpeaks of; out of this fountain Chriſt flowed to us, and both ran into that of complacency; for therefore he both purpoſed and actually beſtowed Chriſt on us, that he might everlaſtingly delight in beholding the glory and praiſe of all this reflected on himſelf, by his *redeemed* ones. This then is the fountain of our mercies.

2. The mercy flowing out of this fountain, and that is Chriſt; *The mercy*, as he is emphatically called, Luke i. 72. The marrow, kernel, and ſubſtance of all other mercies. He gave his * only begotten Son: This was the birth of that love, the like whereunto it never brought forth before, therefore 'tis expreſſed with a double emphaſis in the text, the one is the particle οὕτω ſo; "he ſo loved the world;" here is a *ſic* without a *ſicut*: How did he love it? Why, he *ſo loved it*; but how much, the tongues of angels cannot declare. And moreover, to enhance the mercy, he is ſtiled his only begotten Son: to have given a Son had been wonderful; but to give his only begotten Son, that is love inexpreſſible, unintelligible.

3. The *objects* of this love, or the perſons to whom the eternal

* *Hic igitur unigeniti nomen ἐμφατικὸν eſt ad probandam in nos amoris divini vehementiam.* i. e. This ſtrong epithet, of *only begotten*, is given, in order to heighten the exceeding greatneſs of the love of God towards us. *Bulling.* on this place.

Digitized by Google

Lord delivered Christ, and that is the [World.] This must respect the elect of God in the world, such as do, or shall actually believe, as it is exigetically expressed in the next words, "That "whosoever believes in him should not perish:" Those whom he calls the *world* in that, he stiles *believers* in this expression; and the word [World] is put to signify the elect, because they are scattered through all parts, and are among all ranks of men in the world; these are the objects of this love; it is not angels, but men, that were so loved; he is called φιλανθρωπος, a Lover, a Friend of Men, but never φιλαγγελος, or φιλοκυριος, the Lover or Friend of Angels, or creatures of another species.

4. The manner in which this never-enough celebrated mercy flows to us, from the fountain of divine love, and that is most freely and spontaneously. He *gave*, not he *sold*, or barely parted from, but gave. Nor yet doth the Father's giving imply Christ to be merely passive; for as the Father is here said to give him, so the apostle tells us, Gal. ii. 20. That he gave himself, "who loved "me, and gave himself for me:" The Father gave him out of good will to men, and he as willingly bestowed himself on that service. Hence the note is,

DOCT. *That the gift of Christ is the highest and fullest manifestation of the love of God to sinners, that ever was made from eternity to them.*

How is this gift of God to sinners signalized in that place of the apostle, 1 John iv. 10. "Herein is love; not that we loved God, "but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for "our sins?" Why doth the apostle so manify this gift in saying, "Herein is love," as if there were love in nothing else!* May we not say, that to have a being, a being among the rational creatures, therein is love? To have our life carried so many years like a taper in the hand of Providence, through so many dangers, and not yet put out in obscurity, therein is love? To have food and raiment, convenient for us, beds to lie on, relations to comfort us, in all these is love? Yea, but if you speak comparatively, in all these there is no love, to the love expressed in sending or giving Christ for us: These are great mercies in themselves; but compared to this mercy, they are all swallowed up, as the light of candles when brought into the sun-shine. No, no, herein is love,

* God loves all his creatures; and among these he especially loves those he hath endowed with reason, and of those he loves more especially those who are members of the Only-begotten. How much more the Only-begotten himself! *Aug. T. 9. on John.*

Digitized by Google

that God gave Christ for us. And it is remarkable, that when the apostle would shew us, in Rom. v. 8. what is the noblest fruit that most commends to men the root of divine love that bears it, he shews us this very fruit of it that I am now opening; "But "God, saith he, commendeth his love towards us, in that while "we were yet sinners, Christ died for us:" this is the very flower of that love.

The method into which I will cast this precious point, shall be this: (1.) To shew how Jesus Christ was given by the Father. (2.) How that gift is the fullest and richest manifestation of the love of God that was ever made to the world. (3.) And then draw forth the uses of it.

1. How was Jesus Christ given by the Father, and what is implied therein.

You are not so to understand it, as though God parted with his interest and property in his Son, when he is said to give him; he was as much his own as ever. When men give, they transfer property to another; but when God had given him, he was, I say, still as much his own as ever: but this giving of Christ implies,

(1.) His designation and appointment unto death for us; for so you read, that it was done "according to the determinate counsel "of God," Acts ii. 23. Look, as the Lamb under the Law was separated from the flock, and set apart for a sacrifice; though it were still living, yet it was intentionally, and preparatively given, and consecrated to the Lord: so Jesus Christ was, by the counsel and purpose of God, thus chosen, and set apart for his service: and therefore in Isa. xlii. 1. God calls him *his Elect*, or chosen One.

(2.) His giving Christ, implies a parting with him, or setting him (as the French hath it) at some distance from himself for a time. There was a kind of parting betwixt the Father and the Son, when he came to tabernacle in our flesh: so he expresseth it, John xvi. 28. "I came forth from the Father, and am come "into the world; again, I leave the world and go to the Father." This distance that this incarnation and humiliation set him at, was properly as to his humanity, which was really distant from the glory into which it is now taken up, and in respect of manifestation of delight and love, the Lord seemed to carry it as one at a distance from him. Oh! this was it that so deeply pierced, and wounded his soul, as is evident from that complaint, Psal. xxii. 1, 2. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? "Why art thou so far from the words of my roaring? O my "God, I cry in the day-time, but thou hearest not," &c.

(3.) God's giving of Christ, implies his delivering him into the hands of justice to be punished; even as condemned persons are,

Digitized by Google

by ſentence of law, given or delivered into the hands of executioners. So Acts ii. 23. "Him, being delivered by the determinate "counſel of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have "ſlain:" and ſo he is ſaid, Rom. viii. 32. "To deliver him up to death for us all." The Lord, when the time was come that Chriſt muſt ſuffer, did, as it were, ſay, O all ye roaring waves of my incenſed juſtice, now ſwell as high as heaven, and go over his ſoul and body; ſink him to the bottom; let him go, like Jonah, his type, into the belly of hell, unto the roots of the mountains. Come all ye raging ſtorms, that I have reſerved for this day of wrath, beat upon him, beat him down, that he may not be able to look up, Pſal. lx. 12. Go juſtice, put him upon the rack, torment him in every part, till all his "bones *be* out of joint, *and his* "heart within him *be* melted as wax in the midſt of his bowels," Pſal. xxii. 14. And ye aſſembly of the wicked Jews and Gentiles, that have ſo long gaped for his blood, now he is delivered into your hands; you are permitted to execute your malice to the full: I now looſe your chain, and into your hand and power is he delivered.

(4.) God's giving of Chriſt, implies his application of him, with all the purchaſe of his blood, and ſettling all this upon us, as an inheritance and portion, John vi. 32, 33. "My Father giveth you "the true bread from heaven; for the bread of God is he which "cometh down from heaven, and giveth light to the world." God hath given him as bread to poor ſtarving creatures, that by faith they might eat and live. And ſo he told the Samaritaneſs, John iv. 10. "If thou kneweſt the gift of God, and who it is "that ſaith unto thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldſt have aſk-"ed of him, and he would have given thee living water." Bread and water are the two neceſſaries for the ſupport of natural life; God hath given Chriſt, you ſee, to be all that, and more, to the ſpiritual life.

2. How this gift of Chriſt was the higheſt, and fulleſt manifeſtation of the love of God, that ever the world ſaw:* and this will be evidenced by the following particulars:

(1.) If you conſider how near and dear Jeſus Chriſt was to the Father; he was his Son, "his only Son," ſaith the text; the Son of his love, the darling of his Soul; His other Self, yea, one with himſelf; the expreſs image of his perſon; the brightneſs of his Father's Glory: In parting with him, he parted with his own

* God might have redeemed us in another way, (for I ſuppoſe 'tis *opus liberi conſilii*) a free diſpenſation: but God ſo loved the world, *i. e.* he took this way, that we might love Chriſt as well as believe in him. He might have redeemed us ſo much in another way, but he could not oblige us ſo much in another way. *Manton on Jude*, p. 108. *Mr Wall* in his *None but Chriſt.*

Digitized by Google

heart, with his very bowels, as I may ſay. "Yet to us a Son is "given," Iſa. ix. 6. and ſuch a Son as he calls "his dear Son," Col. i. 13. A late writer tells us, that he hath been informed, that in the famine in Germany, a poor family being ready to periſh with famine, the huſband made a motion to the wife, to ſell one of the children for bread, to relieve themſelves and the reſt: The wife at laſt conſents it ſhould be ſo; but then they began to think which of the four ſhould be ſold; and when the eldeſt was named, they both refuſed to part with that, being their firſt-born, and the beginning of their ſtrength. Well, then they came to the ſecond, but could not yield that he ſhould be ſold, being the very picture and lively image of his father. The third was named, but that alſo was a child that beſt reſembled the mother. And when the youngeſt was thought on, that was the Benjamin, the child of their old age; and ſo were content rather to periſh altogether in the famine, than to part with a child for relief. And you know how tenderly Jacob took it, when his Joſeph and Benjamin were rent from him. What is a child, but a piece of the parent wrapt up in another ſkin? And yet our deareſt children are but as ſtrangers to us, in compariſon of the unſpeakable dearneſs that was betwixt the Father and Chriſt.———Now, that he ſhould ever be content to part with a Son, and ſuch an only One, is ſuch a manifeſtation of love, as will be admired to all eternity. And then,

(2.) Let it be conſidered, *To what he gave him*, even to death, and that of the croſs; to be made a curſe for us; to be the ſcorn and contempt of men; to the moſt unparalleled ſufferings that ever were inflicted or borne by any. It melts our bowels, it breaks our heart, to behold our children ſtriving in the pangs of death: but the Lord beheld his Son ſtruggling under agonies that never any felt before him.* He ſaw him falling to the ground, groveling in the duſt, ſweating blood, and amidſt thoſe agonies turning himſelf to his Father, and, with a heart-rending cry, beſeeching him, "Father, if it be poſſible, let this cup paſs," Luke xxii. 42. To wrath, to the wrath of an infinite God without mixture; to the very torments of hell was Chriſt delivered, and that by the hand of his own Father. Sure then that love muſt needs want a name, which made the Father of mercies deliver his only Son to ſuch miſeries for us.

(3.) It is a ſpecial conſideration to enhance the love of God in giving Chriſt, that in giving him he gave the richeſt jewel in his cabinet; a mercy of the greateſt worth, and moſt ineſtimable value. Heaven itſelf is not ſo valuable and precious as Chriſt is: He is the better half of heaven; and ſo the ſaints account him, Pſal. lxxiii.

* Chriſt's pain was ſorer than all pains put together. *Aquinas.*

Digitized by Google

25. "Whom have I in heaven but thee?" Ten thousand thousand worlds, *saith one* *, as many worlds as angels can number, and then as a new world of angels can multiply, would not all be the bulk of a balance, to weigh Christ's excellency, love, and sweetness. O what a fair One! what an only One! what an excellent, lovely, ravishing One, is Christ! Put the beauty of ten thousand paradises, like the garden of Eden, into one; put all trees, all flours, all smells, all colours, all tastes, all joys, all sweetness, all loveliness in one; O what a fair and excellent thing would that be? And yet it should be less to that fair and dearest well-beloved Christ, than one drop of rain to the whole seas, rivers, lakes, and fountains of ten thousand earths. Christ is heaven's wonder, and earth's wonder.

Now, for God to bestow the mercy of mercies, the most precious thing in heaven or earth, upon poor sinners; and, as great, as lovely, as excellent as his son was, yet not to account him too good to bestow upon us, what manner of love is this!

(4.) Once more, let it be considered on whom the Lord bestowed his son: upon angels? No, but upon men. Upon man his friend? No, but upon his enemies. This is love; and on this consideration the apostle lays a mighty weight, in Rom. v. 8, 9, 10. "But God (saith he) commendeth his love towards us, in that "while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us,—When we "were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his "Son." Who would part with a son for the sake of his dearest friends? but God gave him to, and delivered him for enemies: O love unspeakable!

(5.) *Lastly*, Let us consider how freely this gift came from him: It was not wrested out of his hand by our importunity; for we as little desired as deserved it: It was surprising, preventing, eternal love, that delivered him to us: "Not that we loved him, but he "first loved us," 1 John iv. 19. Thus as when you weigh a thing, you cast in weight after weight, till the scales break; so doth God, one consideration upon another, to overcome our hearts, and make us admiringly to cry, what manner of love is this! And thus I have shewed you what God's giving of Christ is, and what matchless love is manifested in that incomparable gift.

Next we shall apply this, in some practical corollaries.

Corollary 1. Learn hence, *The exceeding preciousness of souls, and at what a high rate God values them, that he will give his Son, his only Son out of his bosom, as a ransom for them.* Surely this speaks their preciousness: God would not have parted with such a Son for small matters: all the world could not redeem them; gold and

* *Christus et cælum non patiuntur hyperbolen.* Christ and heaven can suffer no hyperbole.

Digitized by Google

ſilver could not be their ranſom; ſo ſpeaks the apoſtle, 1 Peter i. 18. "You were not redeemed with corruptible things, as ſilver "and gold, but with the precious blood of Chriſt." Such an eſteem God had for them, that rather than they ſhould periſh, Jeſus Chriſt ſhall be made a man, yea, a curſe for them. Oh then, learn to put a due value upon your own ſouls: do not ſell that cheap, which God hath paid ſo dear for: Remember what a treaſure you carry about you; the glory that you ſee in this world is not equivalent in worth to it. Matth. xvi. 26, "What ſhall a "man give in exchange for his ſoul?"

Corollary 2. If God has given his own Son for the world, then it follows, that *thoſe for whom God gave his own Son, may warrantably expect any other temporal mercies from him.* This is the apoſtle's inference, Rom. viii. 32. "He that ſpared not his own Son, but "delivered him up for us all; how ſhall he not, with him, free-"ly give us all things?" And ſo 1 Cor. iii. 21, 22. "All is yours, "for ye are Chriſt's." i. e. They hold all other things in Chriſt, who is the capital, and moſt comprehenſive mercy.

To make out the grounds of this comfortable deduction, let theſe four things be pondered, and duly weighed in your thoughts. (1.) No other mercy you need or deſire, is, or can be ſo dear to God, as Jeſus Chriſt is: he never laid any other thing in his boſom, as he did his Son. As for the world, and the comforts of it, it is the duſt of his feet, he values it not; as you ſee by his providential diſpoſals of it; having given it to the worſt of men. "All the Turkiſh empire," ſaith Luther, "as great and glorious as it is, is but a crumb which the maſter of the family throws to the dogs."* Think upon any other outward enjoyment that is valuable in your eyes, and there is not ſo much compariſon betwixt it and Chriſt, in the eſteem of God, as is betwixt your dear children and the lumber of your houſes, in your eſteem. If then God has parted ſo freely from that which was infinitely dearer to him than theſe; how ſhall he deny theſe, when they may promote his glory, and your good? (2.) As Jeſus Chriſt was nearer the heart of God than all theſe; ſo Chriſt is, in himſelf, much greater and more excellent than all of them: Ten thouſand worlds, and the glory of them all, is but the duſt of the balance, if weighed with Chriſt. Theſe things are but poor creatures, but he is over all, God bleſſed for ever, Rom. ix. 5. They are common gifts, but he is *the Gift of God*, John iv. 10. They are ordinary mercies, but he is *The mercy*, Luke i. 72. As one pearl, or precious ſtone, is greater in value than ten thouſand common pebbles. Now, if

* *Totum Turcicum imperium, quantum quantum eſt, mica tantum eſt, quam Pater-familias projicit canibus.* Luther.

Digitized by Google

God has so freely given the greater, how can you suppose he should deny the lesser, mercies? Will a man give to another a large inheritance, and stand with him for a trifle? how can it be? (3.) There is no other mercy you want, but you are entitled to it by the gift of Christ; it is, as to right, conveyed to you with Christ. So, in the fore-cited 1 Cor. iii. 21, 22, 23. "the world is yours, "yea, all is yours; for ye are Christ's," So 2 Cor. i. 20. "For "all the promises of God in Christ, in him they are yea, and in him, amen." With him he hath given you all things, πὶς απολαυσιν, 1 Tim. vi. 17. *richly to enjoy:* the word signifies *rem aliquam cum lætitia percipere*, to have the sweet relish and comfort of an enjoyment. So have we in all our mercies, upon the account of our title to them in Christ. (4.) *Lastly*, If God has given you this *nearer, greater*, and *all-comprehending mercy*, when you were enemies to him, and alienated from him; it is not imaginable he should deny you any inferior mercy, when you are come into a state of reconciliation and amity with him. So the apostle reasons, Rom. v. 8, 9, 10. "For if, when we were enemies, we were recon- "ciled to God, by the death of his Son; much more being recon- "ciled, we shall be saved by his life.,' And thus you have the second inference with its grounds.

Corollary 3. If the greatest love hath been manifested in giving Christ to the world, then it follows, *that the greatest evil and wickedness is manifested in despising, slighting, and rejecting Christ.* It is sad to abuse the love of God manifested in the lowest gift of providence; but, to slight the richest discoveries of it, even in that peerless gift, wherein God commends his love in the most taking and astonishing manner; this is sin with a witness. Blush, O heavens, and be astonished, O earth; yea, be ye horribly afraid! No guilt like this. The most flagitious wretches among the barbarous nations are innocent, in comparison of these. But, are there any such in the world? Dare any slight this gift of God? Indeed, if men's words might be taken, there are few or none that dare do so; but if their lives and practices may be believed, this, this is the sin of the far greater part of the christianized world. Witness the lamentable stupidity and supineness: witness the contempt of the gospel; witness the hatred and persecution of his image, laws and people. What is the language of all this, but a vile esteem of Jesus Christ?

And now, let me a little expostulate with those ungrateful souls, that trample under foot the Son of God, that value not this love that gave him forth. What is that mercy which you so contemn and undervalue? is it so vile and cheap a thing as your entertainment speaks it to be? is it indeed worth no more than this in your eyes? Surely you will not be long of that opinion! Will you be of

Digitized by Google

that mind, think you, when death and judgment ſhall have thoroughly awakened you! Oh, no: Then a thouſand worlds for a Chriſt! as it is ſtoried of our crooked-backed Richard, when he loſt the field, and was in great danger by his enemies that preſſed upon him; Oh now, (ſaid he) a kingdom for a horſe! Or think ye, that any beſide you in the world are of your mind? you are deceived, if you think ſo. "To them that believe he is precious," through all the world, 1 Pet. ii. 7. and in the other world they are of a quite contrary mind. Could you but hear what is ſaid of him in heaven, in what a dialect the ſaved of the Lord do extol their Saviour; or could you but imagine the ſelf-revenges, the ſelf-torments, which the damned ſuffer for their folly, and what a value they would ſet upon one tender of Chriſt, if it might but again be hoped for; you would ſee that ſuch as you are the only deſpiſers of Chriſt.* Beſide, methinks it is aſtoniſhing, that you ſhould deſpiſe a mercy in which your own ſouls are ſo dearly, ſo deeply, ſo everlaſtingly concerned, as they are in this gift of God. If it were but the ſoul of another, nay, leſs, if but the body of another, and yet leſs than that, if but another's beaſt, whoſe life you could preſerve, you are obliged to do it; but when it is thyſelf, yea, the beſt part of thyſelf, thine own invaluable ſoul, that thou ruineſt and deſtroyeſt thereby, Oh, what a monſter art thou, to caſt it away thus! What! will you ſlight your own ſouls? care you not whither they be ſaved, or whether they be damned? is it indeed an indifferent thing with you which way they fall at death? have you imagined a tolerable hell? is it eaſy to periſh? are you not only turned God's enemies, but your own too? Oh ſee what monſters ſin can turn men and women into! Oh the ſtupifying, beſotting, intoxicating power of ſin! But perhaps you think that all theſe are but uncertain ſounds, with which we alarm you; it may be thine own heart will preach ſuch doctrine as this to thee: Who can aſſure thee of the reality of theſe things? why ſhouldeſt thou trouble thyſelf with an inviſible world, or be ſo much concerned for what thine eyes never ſaw, nor didſt ever receive the report from any that have ſeen them? Well, though we cannot now ſhew you theſe things, yet ſhortly they ſhall be ſhewn you; and your own eyes ſhall behold them. You are convinced and ſatisfied that many other things are real which you never ſaw: but be aſſured, That "if the word ſpoken by angels was ſtedfaſt, and "every tranſgreſſion and diſobedience received a juſt recompence

* Fy, fy, ſaith one, upon this condemned and fooliſh world, that will give ſo little for Chriſt and ſalvation: Oh! if there were but a free market proclaimed of Chriſt and ſalvation in that day, when the trumpet of God ſhall awaken the dead, how many buyers would be there? God ſend me no more happineſs but that which the blind world (to their eternal woe) letteth ſlip through their fingers.

Digitized by Google

"of reward, how shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salva-"tion, which at first began to be spoken to us by the Lord, and "was confirmed to us by them that heard him, God also bearing "them witness?" Heb. ii. 2, 3, 4. But if they be certain, yet they are not near; it will be a long time before they come. Poor soul! how dost thou cheat thyself? It may be not by twenty parts so long a time as thy own fancy draws it forth for thee; thou art not certain of the next moment.

And suppose what thou imaginest: What are twenty or forty years when they are past? yea, what are a thousand years to vast eternity? Go trifle away a few days more, sleep out a few nights more, and then lie down in the dust; it will not be long ere the trump of God shall awaken thee, and thine eyes shall behold Jesus coming in the clouds of heaven, and then you will know the price of this sin. Oh, therefore, if there be any sense of eternity upon you, any pity or love for yourselves in you; if you have any concernments more than the beasts that perish, despise not your own offered mercies, slight not the richest gift that ever was yet opened to the world; and a sweeter cannot be opened to all eternity.

SERMON V.

Of CHRIST's wonderful Person.

JOHN i. 14.

And the Word was made Flesh, and dwelt among us, &c.

YOU have heard the covenant of redemption opened. The work therein propounded by the Father, and consented to by the Son, is such as infinitely exceeds the power of any mere creature to perform. He that undertakes to satisfy God, by obedience for man's sin, must himself be God; and he that performs such a perfect obedience, by doing, and suffering all that the law required, in our room, must be man. These two natures must be united in one person, else there could not be a concourse or co-operation of either nature in his mediatory works. How these natures are united, in the wonderful person of our *Immanuel*, is the first part of the great mystery of godliness:* a subject studied

* The incarnation is the miracle of miracles; a testimony against unbelievers, Isa. vii. 14. and a document to believers. None can declare his generation, Isa. liii. 8. Neither can any declare his incarnation, his name is secret, Judges xiii. 18. Won-

Digitized by Google

and adored by angels! and the myſtery thereof is wrapped up in this text. Wherein we have,

Firſt, The incarnation of the Son of God plainly aſſerted.

Secondly, That aſſertion ſtrongly confirmed.

(1.) In the aſſertion we have three parts.

1. The *Perſon aſſuming*, ο Λογος, the Word,* *i. e.* the ſecond Perſon or Subſiſtent in the moſt glorious Godhead, called the Word, either becauſe he is the ſcope or principal matter, both of the prophetical and promiſſory word; or becauſe he expounds and reveals the mind and will of God to men, as verſe 18. The only-begotten Son which is in the boſom of the Father, he hath declared or expounded him.

2. The *Nature aſſumed*, σαρξ, Fleſh, *i. e.* the intire human nature, conſiſting of a true human ſoul and body. For ſo this word σαρξ, in Rom. iii. 20. and the Hebrew word בשר which anſwers to it, by an uſual *Metonomy* of a part for the whole, is uſed, Gen. vi. 12. And the word *Fleſh* is rather uſed here, than *Man*, on purpoſe to enhance the admirable condeſcenſion and abaſement of Chriſt; there being more of vileneſs, weakneſs, and oppoſition to ſpirit in this word, than in that, as is pertinently noted by ſome. Hence the whole nature is denominated by that part, and called fleſh.

3. The *aſſumption* itſelf, εγενετο, he was made; not *fuit*, he was, (as Socinus would render it, deſigning thereby to overthrow the exiſtence of Chriſt's glorified body now in heaven) but *factus eſt*, it was made, *i. e.* he took or aſſumed the true human nature (called fleſh,† for the reaſon before rendered) into the unity of his divine perſon, with all its integral parts and eſſential properties; and ſo was made, or became a true and real man, by that aſſumption. The apoſtle ſpeaking of the ſame act, Heb. ii. 16. uſes another word, *He took on him*, επιλαμβανεται, fitly rendered *he took on him*, or he aſſumed; which aſſuming, though inchoative, it was the work of the whole Trinity, God the Father, in the Son, by the Spirit, forming or creating that nature; as if three ſiſters ſhould make a garment betwixt them, which only one of them wears: yet, terminative, it was the act of the Son only; it washe

derful, Iſa. ix. 6. A name that no man knoweth, *viz.* perfectly, but himſelf. The Trinity is the greateſt, the incarnation the next myſtery. *Norton's Orthodox Evangeliſt*, p. 38.

* Word, a real ſubſtance, or perſon; and not a word, ſpoken or uttered. *Fulgent.* Book I.

† The Evangeliſt choſe to uſe the word, Fleſh, inſtead of Man, that it might the more appear how far the Word that was God, humbled himſelf, when he was made Fleſh. For there is manifeſtly more of Vileneſs, and greater oppoſition to Spirit implied in the word Fleſh than in the word Man. *Mayerne's Common Places.*

Digitized by Google

only that was *made flesh*. And when it is said, he was made flesh, misconceive not, as if there was a mutation of the Godhead into flesh; for this was performed,* "not by changing what he was, "but by assuming what he was not," as Augustine well expresseth it. As when the scripture, in a like expression, saith, "He was "made sin," 2 Cor. v. 21. and made a curse, Gal. iii. 13. the meaning is not, that he was turned into sin, or into a curse; no more may we think here the Godhead was turned into flesh, and lost its own being and nature, because it is said he was made flesh. This is the sum of the assertion.

(2.) This assertion ["that the word was made flesh,"] is strongly confirmed. He "dwelt among us," and we saw his glory. This was no phantasm, but a most real and indubitable thing. For, εσκηνωσεν εν ημιν, pitched his tent, or tabernacled with us. And we are eye-witnesses of it. Parallel to that, 1 John i. 1, 2, 3. "That "which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we "have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our "hands have handled, of the Word of life, &c. declare we unto "you." Hence note,

Doct. *That Jesus Christ did really assume the true and perfect nature of man, into a personal union with his divine nature, and still remains true God, and true man, in one person for ever.*

The proposition contains one of the deepest mysteries of godliness,† 1 Tim. iii. 16. A mystery, by which apprehension is dazzled, invention astonished, and all expression swallowed up. If ever the tongues of angels were desirable to explicate any word of God, they are so here. Great is the interest of words in this doctrine. We walk upon the brink of danger. The least tread awry may ingulph us in the bogs of error. Arius would have been content, if the council of Nice would but have gratified him in a letter, ομοουσιος, and ομοιουσιος. The Nestorians also desired but a letter, Θεοδοχος, Θεοτοκος. These seemed but small and modest requests, but, if granted, had proved no small prejudice to Jesus Christ, and his truths. I desire therefore the reader would, with greatest

* *Non mutando quod erat, sed assumendo, quod non erat.* Aug.

† The incarnation is God's work, whereby the Son of God, (according to the œconomy of the divine counsel of the Father, of the Son, and of the holy Spirit) humbling and abasing himself, took from the Virgin Mary, by the power and efficacy of the holy Spirit upon her; real, entire, perfect, holy Flesh; yet so as that that Flesh had no proper subsistence without the Son of God, but was really borne and carried about by him; the two entire natures being united among themselves, without any change of the one into the other, without confusion, without division, and inseparably, &c. Whence is constituted the person of Christ, God-man.—— *Synopsis purioris Theo.*

Digitized by Google

attention of mind, apply himself to these truths. It is a doctrine hard to understand, and dangerous to mistake. I am really of his mind that said,* 'It is better not touch the bottom, than not 'keep within the circle:' *Melius est nescire centrum, quam non tenere circulum.* He did assume a true human body; that is plainly asserted, Phil. ii. 7, 8, &c. Heb. ii. 14, 16. In one place it is called taking on him the seed of Abraham, and in the text, *flesh.* He did also assume a true human soul, this is undeniable by its operations, passions, and expiration at last, Mat. xxvi. 38. and xxvii. 50. And that both these natures make but one person, is as evident from Rom. i. 3, 4. "Jesus Christ was made of the seed "of David, according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of "God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the re-"surrection from the dead." So Rom. ix. 5. "Of whom, as "concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed "for ever. Amen." But that you may have a sound and clear understanding of this mystery, I will, (1.) Open the nature; (2.) The effects; and (3.) The reasons or ends of this wonderful union.

The nature of the hypostatical union opened.

First, The nature of this union. There are three illustrious and dazzling unions in scripture: that of three persons in one God, *Essentially.* That of two distinct natures, and persons; by one spirit *Mystically:* and this of two distinct natures in one person, *Hypostatically.* This is my task to open at this time: and, for the more distinct and perspicuous management thereof, I shall speak to it both *negatively* and *positively.*

Not consubstantially.

1. *Negatively.* Think not when Christ assumed our nature, that it was united *consubstantially*, so as the three persons in the Godhead are united among themselves. They all have but one and the same nature and will; but in Christ are two distinct natures and wills, though but one person.

Not physically.

2. Nor yet that they are united *Physically*, as soul and body are united in one person; for death actually dissolves that; but this is indissoluble. So that when his soul expired, and his body was interred, both soul and body were still united to the second Person as much as ever.

Not mystically.

3. Nor yet is it such a *mystical union*, as is between Christ and believers. Indeed that is a glorious

* Reason (saith one) can never shew itself more reasonable, than in ceasing to reason about things which are above reason. Whatsoever is concealed from us, that we are not to pry into. But we are not to overlook what is plain and manifest. *Prosper.*

Digitized by Google

union; but though believers are said to be in Christ, and Christ in them, yet they are not one person with him. They are not christed into Christ, or godded into God, as blasphemous *Familists* speak.

Secondly, Positively. But this assumption of which I speak, is that whereby the second Person in the Godhead did take the human nature into a personal union with himself, by virtue whereof the manhood subsists in the second person, yet without confusion, both making but one person, Θεανθρωπος, or *Immanuel*, God with us.

So that though we truly ascribe a two-fold nature to Christ, yet not a double person:* for, the human nature of Christ never subsisted separately and distinctly, by any personal subsistence of its own, as it doth in all other men, but from the first moment of conception, subsisted in union with the second person.

To explicate this mystery more particularly, let it be considered;

First, The human nature was united to the second person *miraculously* and extraordinarily, being supernaturally framed in the womb of the Virgin, by the over-shadowing power of the Highest, Luke i. 34, 35. By reason whereof it may truly and properly be said to be the fruit of the womb, not of the loins of men, nor by man. And this was necessary to exempt the assumed nature from the stain and pollution of Adam's sin, which it wholly escaped; inasmuch as he received it not, as all others do, in the way of ordinary generation, wherein original sin is propagated; but this being extraordinarily produced, was a most pure and holy thing, Luke i. 35. And indeed this perfect shining holiness, in which it was produced, was absolutely necessary, both in order to its union with the divine Person, and the design of that union; which was both to satisfy for, and to sanctify us. The two natures could not be conjoined in the person of Christ, had there been the least taint of sin upon the human nature. For God can have no fellowship with sin, much less be united to it. Or, supposing such a conjunction with our sinful nature, yet he being a sinner himself, could never satisfy for the sins of others; nor could any unholy thing ever make us holy. "Such an High-priest therefore became us "as is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners," Heb. vii. 26. And such an one he must needs be, whom the Holy Ghost produces in such a peculiar way, το αγιον, that holy thing.

Secondly, As it was produced miraculously, so it was assumed *integrally*: that is to say, Christ took a complete and perfect human

* The human nature is not, ἰδιοσυστατος subsisting of itself, nor did the human nature exist before it was assumed; but so soon as the flesh existed, it was the flesh of the Word of God. And so the person of Christ is one, in which there are two distinct things, but not two distinct persons. *Greg. Naz. in Theodoret, Dialogue* 2.

Digitized by Google

ſoul and body, with all and every faculty and member pertaining to it. And this was neceſſary (as both * Auſtin and † Fulgentius have well obſerved) that thereby he might heal the whole nature of that leproſy of ſin, which hath ſeized and infected every member and faculty. Παντα ανιλαβιν ινα παντα αγιαζη. "He aſſumed "all, to ſanctify all;" as Damaſcen expreſſeth it. He deſigned a perfect recovery, by ſanctifying us wholly in ſoul, body, and ſpirit; and therefore aſſumed the whole in order to it.

Thirdly, He aſſumed our nature, as with all its integral parts, ſo with all its *ſinleſs infirmities*. And therefore it is ſaid of him, Heb. ii. 17. "That it behoved him," κατα παντα ομοιωθηναι, according to all things (that is, all things natural, not formally ſinful,‡ as it is limited by the ſame apoſtle, Heb. iv. 15.) to be made like unto his brethren. But here our divines do carefully diſtinguiſh infirmities into *perſonal* and *natural*. Perſonal infirmities are ſuch as befal particular perſons, from particular cauſes, ſuch as dumbneſs, blindneſs, lameneſs, leproſies, monſtroſities, and other deformities. Theſe it was no way neceſſary that Chriſt ſhould, nor did he at all aſſume; but the natural ones, ſuch as hunger, thirſt, wearineſs, ſweating, bleeding, mortality, &c. which though they are not in themſelves formally and intrinſically ſinful; yet are they the effects and conſequents of ſin. They are ſo many marks, that ſin hath left of itſelf upon our natures. And on that account Chriſt is ſaid to be ſent "in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh," Rom. viii. 3. Wherein the gracious condeſcenſion of Chriſt for us is marvellouſly ſignalized, that he would not aſſume our innocent nature, as it was in Adam before the fall, while it ſtood in all its primitive glory and perfection; but after ſin had quite defaced, ruined, and ſpoiled it.

Fourthly, The human nature is ſo united with the divine, as that each nature ſtill retains its own eſſential properties diſtinct.§ And this diſtinction is not, nor can be loſt by that union. So that

---

* *Aug. de Civit. Dei.* lib. 10. cap. 27. p. 586.

† *Fulgent. ad Tra* l. 1. p. 251. *Damaſc.* lib. 3. cap. 20.

‡ The natural pollution and original defilement of ſin, which cleaves to human nature in general, could not infect the human nature of Chriſt, becauſe the Holy Spirit, according to his own manner of working, had made it abſolutely undefiled and impeccable, or, incapable of committing ſin; and ſuch a perfect and ſinleſs nature it behoved to be, in which our ſins, with their defilement and guilt, were to be done away. *Trel. Juſtif.* p. 58.

§ By this union of the human with the divine nature, the human nature is not raiſed to the ſame perfection with the divine, nor changed into it, nor confounded with it; as if what is any way peculiar to the divine, were communicated to the human nature; but that the one always did, and doth, remain totally diſtinct from the other; the human, to wit, conſiſting of a finite body, and of a ſoul, the ſame, as to ſubſtance and eſſential powers, with other men's. *Bradſhaw on Juſtification*, p. 79.

Digitized by Google

the two understandings, wills, powers, &c. *viz.* The divine and human, are not confounded; but a line of distinction runs betwixt them still in this wonderful person. It was the heresy of the Eutychians, condemned by the counsel of Chalcedon, to affirm, that there was no distinction betwixt the two natures in Christ. Against whom that counsel determined, that they were united ασυγχυτως, without any immutation, or confusion.

Fifthly, The union of the two natures in Christ, as an *inseparable union*; so that from the first moment thereof, there never was, nor to eternity shall be, any separation of them.

Doubt. If you ask how the union remained betwixt them, when Christ's human soul and body were separated from each other upon the cross? Is not death the dissolution of the union betwixt soul and body?

Resolution. True, the natural union betwixt his soul and body was dissolved by death for a time, but this hypostatical union remained even then as entire and firm as ever: for, though his soul and body were divided from each other, yet neither of them from the divine nature. Divines assist our conception of this mystery, by an apt illustration.* A man that holds in his hand a sword sheathed, when he pleaseth, draws forth the sword; but still holds that in one hand, and the sheath in the other, and then sheaths it again, still holding it in his hand: so when Christ died, his soul and body retained their union with the divine nature, though not (during that space) one with another.

And thus you are to form and regulate your conceptions of this great mystery. Some adumbrations and imperfect similitudes of it may be found in nature. Among which some † commend that union which the soul and body have with each other; they are of different natures, yet both make one individual man. Others‡ find fault with this, because both these united make but one complete human nature; whereas, in Christ's person, there are two natures, and commend to us a more perfect emblem, *viz.* That of the *Cyon* and the tree or stock, which have two natures, yet make but one tree. But then we must remember that the *Cyon* wants a root of its own, which is an integral part, but Christ assumed our nature integrally. This defect is by others § supplied in the *Mi-*

---

* *Tolletus* gives us a fine illustration of it; "Even as a man (says he) holding a "sword sheathed, when he pleaseth, draws forth the sword; but still holds that in "one hand, and the sheath in the other, [and then sheaths it again, still holding "it in his hand:] so the Divine Person separated the soul from the human body, "as it were a sword drawn out of its sheath, but still he held both united to him-"self; but by the resurrection he re-joined the soul to the body, as when one "puts the sword in the scabbard."

† Justin Martyr. ‡ Alex. Alex. § Roberts of the covenant.

Digitized by Google

ſletoe and the *Oak*, which have different natures; and the *Miſletoe* ſubſiſts in union with the *Oak*, ſtill retaining the difference of nature; and though making but one tree, yet bears different fruits. And ſo much to the firſt thing, namely, the nature of this union.

Secondly, For the effects, or immediate reſults of this marvellous union, let theſe three be well conſidered. *The reſults of the hypoſtatical union.*

1. The two natures being thus united in the perſon of the Mediator, by virtue whereof the properties of each nature are attributed, and do truly agree in the whole perſon; ſo that it is proper to ſay, the Lord of glory was crucified, 1 Cor. ii. 8. and the blood of God redeemed the Church, Acts xx. 28. that Chriſt was both in heaven, and in the earth at the ſame time, John iii. 13.

Yet we do not believe that one nature doth transfuſe or impart its properties to the other,* or that it is proper to ſay the divine nature ſuffered, bled, or died; or the human is omniſcient, omnipotent, omnipreſent; but that the properties of both natures, are ſo aſcribed to the perſon, that it is proper to affirm any of them of him in the concrete, though not abſtractly. The right underſtanding of this would greatly aſſiſt, in teaching the true ſenſe of the forenamed, and many other dark paſſages in the ſcriptures.

2. Another fruit of this hypoſtatical union, is the ſingular advancement of the human nature in Chriſt, far beyond and above what it is capable of in any other perſon,† it being hereby repleniſhed and filled with an unparalleled meaſure of divine graces and excellencies; in which reſpect he is ſaid to be "anointed above, or before his fellows," Pſal. xiv. 8. and ſo becomes the object of adoration and divine worſhip, Acts vii. 59. This the Socinians oppugn with this argument: He that is worſhipped with a divine worſhip, as he is Mediator, is not ſo worſhipped as God; but Chriſt is worſhipped as Mediator. But we ſay, that to be worſhipped as Mediator, and as God, are not oppoſite, but the one is neceſſarily included in the other; and therein is farther included the *ratio formalis ſub qua*‡ of that divine religious worſhip.

3. Hence, in the laſt place, follows, as another excellent fruit

* The properties of both natures may be attributed to the whole perſon of Chriſt, in the concrete; the Son of man, who is a Perſon conſiſting of two natures, is everywhere preſent, is eternal, is adorable, that is, he is to be adored according to his divine nature, to which theſe properties (of omnipreſence, eternity, praiſe-worthineſs) are applicable: we adore indeed the Deity incarnate, but the Divinity itſelf is the only perfect object of our worſhip.

† The human nature being thus aſſumed above all other created natures, is, by virtue of this aſſumption, lifted up to the higheſt poſſible pitch of dignity; Heb. i. 4, 5, 6. *Bradſhaw on Juſtification*, p. 79.

‡ The formal ground upon which the worſhip of Chriſt, as Mediator, is founded.

Digitized by Google

of this union, *The concourse and co-operation of each nature to his mediatory works; for in them he acts according to both natures:* the human nature doing what is human, *viz.* suffering, sweating, bleeding, dying; and his divine nature stamping all these with infinite value; and so both sweetly concur unto one glorious work and design of mediation. Papists generally deny that he performs any of these mediatory works as God, but only as man; but how boldly do they therein contradict these plain scriptures? See 2 Cor. v. 10. Heb. ix. 14, 15. And so much as to the second thing propounded, viz. the fruits of this union.

Thirdly, The last thing to be opened is the grounds and reasons of this assumption. And we may say, touching that, (1.) That the human nature was not assumed to any intrinsical perfection of the Godhead, not to make that human nature itself perfect. The divine did not assume the human nature necessarily, but voluntarily; not out of indigence but bounty; not because it was to be perfected by it, but to perfect it, by causing it to lie as a pipe, to the infinite all-filling fountain of grace and glory, of which it is the great receptacle. And so, consequently, to qualify and prepare him for a full discharge of his mediatorship, in the offices of our Prophet, Priest, and King. Had he not this double nature in the unity of his person, he could not have been our Prophet: For, as God, he knows the mind and will of God, John i. 18. and iii. 13. and as man he is fitted to impart it suitably to us, Deut. xviii. 15, 16, 17, 18. compared with Acts xx. 22.

The reasons of the hypostatical union.

As Priest, had he not been man, he could have shed no blood; and if not God, it had been no adequate value for us,* Heb. ii. 17. Acts iii. 28.

As King, had he not been man he had been an heterogeneous, and so no fit head for us. And if not God, he could neither rule nor defend his body the Church.

These then were the designs and ends of that assumption.

Use 1. *Let all Christians rightly inform their minds in this truth of so great concernment in religion, and hold it fast against all subtle adversaries, that would wrest it from them.* The learned Hooker observes, that the dividing of Christ's person, which is but one, and the confounding of his natures, which are two, hath been the occasion of those errors which have so greatly disturbed the peace of the church. The Arians denied his deity, levelling him with

* He made satisfaction in his human nature; but then the worth, the excellency, efficacy and application of that satisfaction flow from the divine nature. *Amesii Bell. Enerv.* lib. 5.

Digitized by Google

other mere men. The Apollinarians maimed his humanity. The Sabellians affirmed, that the Father and Holy Ghoſt were incarnated as well as the Son; and were forced, upon that abſurdity, by another error, *viz.* denying the three diſtinct perſons in the Godhead, and affirming they were but three names. The Eutychians confounded both natures in Chriſt, denying any diſtinction of them. The Seleuſians affirmed, that he unclothed himſelf of his humanity when he aſcended, and hath no human body in heaven. The Neſtorians ſo rent the two names of Chriſt aſunder, as to make two diſtinct perſons of them.

But ye (beloved) *have not ſo learned Chriſt.* Ye know he is (1.) True and very God; (2.) True and very man; that, (3.) theſe two natures make but one perſon, being united inſeparably; (4.) that they are not confounded or ſwallowed up one in another, but remain ſtill diſtinct in the perſon of Chriſt. Hold ye the ſound words which cannot be condemned. Great things hang upon all theſe truths. Oh ſuffer not a ſtone to be looſed out of the foundation.

Uſe 2. *Adore the love of the Father, and the Son, who bid ſo high for your ſouls, and at this rate were contented you ſhould be recovered.*

1. The love of the Father is herein admirably conſpicuous, who ſo vehemently willed our ſalvation, that he was content to degrade the darling of his ſoul to ſo vile and contemptible a ſtate, which was, upon the matter an undoing to him, in point of reputation; as the apoſtle intimates, Phil. ii. 7. If two perſons be at a variance, and the ſuperior, who alſo is the wronged perſon, begin to ſtoop firſt, and ſay, you have deeply wronged me, yea, your blood is not able to repair the wrongs you have done me: however, ſuch is my love to you, and willingneſs to be at peace with you, that I will part with what is moſt dear to me in all the world, for peace-ſake; yea, though I ſtoop below myſelf, and ſeem, as it were, to forget my own relation and endearments to my own ſon, I will not ſuffer ſuch a breach betwixt me and you. John iii. 16. "God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son."

2. And how aſtoniſhing is the love of Chriſt, that would make ſuch a ſtoop as this to exalt us!* Oh, it is raviſhing to think, he ſhould paſs by a more excellent and noble ſpecies of creatures, refuſing the angelic nature, Heb. ii. 16. to take fleſh; and not to ſolace and diſport himſelf in it neither, nor experience ſenſitive pleaſures in the body; for, as he needed them not, being at the fountain-head of the higheſt joys, ſo it was not at all in his deſign,

* No body raiſes another lying low, without firſt ſtooping down, and bowing himſelf to the ground. *Nierem.*

Digitized by Google

but the very contrary, even to make himself a subject capable of sorrows, wounds, and tears.* It was, as the apostle elegantly expresseth it, in Heb. ii. 9. ὅπως ὑπὲρ παντὸς γεύσηται θανάτου; that he might sensibly taste what relish death hath, and what bitterness is in those pangs and agonies. Now, Oh that you would get your hearts suitably impressed and affected with these high impressures of the love both of the Father and the Son! How is the courage of some noble Romans celebrated in history, for the brave adventures they made for the commonwealth; but they could never stoop as Christ did, being so infinitely below him in personal dignity.

Use 3. And here infinite wisdom has also left a famous and everlasting mark of itself; which invites, yea, even chains the eyes of angels and men to itself.† Had there been a general council of angels, to advise upon a way of recovering poor sinners, they would all have been at an everlasting demur and loss about it. It could not have entered their thoughts (though they are intelligencers, and more sagacious creatures) that ever mercy, pardon, and grace, should find such a way as this to issue forth from the heart of God to the hearts of sinners. Oh, how wisely is the method of our recovery laid! so that Christ may be well called, "the "power and wisdom of God," 1 Cor. i. 24; forasmuch as in him the divine wisdom is more glorified than in all the other works of God, upon which he hath impressed it. Hence it is, that some of the schoolmen affirm, (though I confess myself unsatisfied with it) that the incarnation of Christ was in itself so glorious a demonstration of God's wisdom and power, and thereupon so desirable in itself, that though man had not sinned, yet Christ would have been made man.

Use 4. Hence also we infer *the incomparable sweetness of the Christian religion, that shews poor sinners such a fair foundation to rest their trembling consciences upon.* While poor distressed souls look to themselves, they are perpetually puzzled. That is the cry of a distressed natural conscience, Micah vi. 6. "Wherewith shall I "come before the Lord?" the Hebrew is אקדם יהוה how shall I prevent or anticipate the Lord?‡ and so Montanus renders

* The Son of God therefore took flesh, that he might be capable of suffering in human nature, what he could not have done in the Divine, which is incapable of suffering. *Theod.*

† It must surpass human, or even angelical understandings, to conceive, or, if conceived, to hope for such a deliverer: wherefore, if a sinner, sensible of the divine malediction due to his sins, were left to himself, by searching to find out such relief, the more he laboured in the search, the more would he throw himself headlong into a boundless abyss of horror and desperation. *Bradshaw on Justification*, p. 74.

‡ [*Kedom*] Antivertit, anticipavit, obvenit. *Buxtorf.*

Digitized by Google

it, *in quo præoccupabo Dominum?* Conſcience ſees God arming himſelf with wrath, to avenge himſelf for ſin; cries out, Oh, how ſhall I prevent him! if he would accept the fruit of my body, (thoſe dear pledges of nature,) for the ſin of my ſoul, he ſhould have them. But now we ſee God coming down in fleſh, and ſo intimately united our fleſh to himſelf, that it hath no proper ſubſiſtence of its own, but is united with the divine perſon: hence it is eaſy to imagine what worth and value muſt be in that blood; and how eternal love, ſpringing forth triumphantly from it, flouriſhes into pardon, grace, and peace. Here is a way in which the ſinner may ſee juſtice and mercy kiſſing each other, and the latter exerciſed freely, without prejudice to the former. All other conſciences, through the world, lie either in a deep ſleep in the devil's arms, or elſe are rolling (ſea ſick) upon the waves of their own fears and diſmal preſages. Oh, happy are they that have dropped anchor on this ground, and not only know they have peace, but why they have it!

Uſe 5. *Of how great concernment is it, that Chriſt ſhould have union with our particular perſons, as well as with our common nature?* For by this union with our nature alone, never any man was, or can be ſaved. Yea, let me add, that this union with our natures, is utterly in vain to you, and will do you no good, except he have union with your perſons by faith alſo. It is indeed infinite mercy, that God is come ſo near you, as to dwell in your fleſh; and that he hath fixed upon ſuch an excellent method to ſave poor ſinners. And hath he done all this? is he indeed come home, even to your own doors, to ſeek peace? doth he vail his unſupportable glory under fleſh, that he might treat the more familiarly? and yet do you refuſe him, and ſhut your hearts againſt him? then hear one word, and let thine ears tingle at the ſound of it: Thy ſin is hereby aggravated beyond the ſin of devils, who never ſinned againſt a mediator in their own nature; who never deſpiſed, or refuſed, becauſe, indeed, they were never offered terms of mercy, as you are.

And I doubt not but the devils themſelves, who now tempt you to reject, will, to all eternity, upbraid your folly for rejecting this great ſalvation, which in this excellent way is brought down, even to your own doors.

Uſe 6. If Jeſus Chriſt has aſſumed our nature, *then he is ſenſibly touched with the infirmities that attend it, and ſo hath pity and compaſſion for us, under all our burdens.* And indeed this was one end of his aſſuming it, that he might be able to have compaſſion on us, as you read, Heb. ii. 17, 18. "Wherefore in all things it be-"hoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be "a merciful and faithful High-prieſt, in things pertaining to God,

Digitized by Google

" to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he " himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them " that are tempted." O what a comfort is this to us, that he who is our High-priest in heaven, hath our nature on him, to enable him to take compassion on us!

Use 7. Hence we see, *to what a height God intends to build up the happiness of man, in that he hath laid the foundation thereof so deep, in the incarnation of his own Son.*

They that intend to build high, use to lay the foundation low. The happiness and glory of our bodies, as well as souls, are founded in Christ's taking our flesh upon him: for, therein, as in a model or pattern, God intended to shew what in time he resolves to make of our bodies; for he will μετασχηματιζειν, *transform* our vile bodies, and make them one day conformable to the glorious body of Jesus Christ, Phil. iii. 21. This flesh was therefore assumed by Christ, that in it might be shewn, as in a pattern, how God intends to honour and exalt it. And, indeed, a greater honour cannot be done to the nature of man, than what is already done, by this grace of union; nor are our persons capable of higher glory, than what consists in their conformity to this glorious head. Indeed the flesh of Christ will ever have a distinct glory from ours in heaven, by reason of this union; for being the body which the Word assumed, it is two ways advanced singularly above the flesh and blood of all other men, *viz. subjectively*, and *objectively*: Subjectively, it is the flesh and blood of God, Acts xx. 28. and so hath a distinct and incommunicable glory of its own. And objectively, it is the flesh and blood which all the angels and saints adore. But though in these things it be supereminently exalted, yet it is both the medium and pattern of all that glory which God designs to raise us to.

Use 8. Lastly, *How wonderful a comfort is it, that he who dwells in our flesh is God?* What joy may not a poor believer make out of this? what comfort one made out of it, I will give you in his own words, " I see it a work of God, (saith he) that experiences are " all lost, when summonses of improbation, to prove our charters " of Christ to be counterfeit, are raised against poor souls in their " heavy trials. But let me be a sinner, and worse than the chief " of sinners, yea, a guilty devil, I am sure my well-beloved is " God, and my Christ is God. And when I say my Christ is " God, I have said all things, I can say no more. I would I " could build as much on this, *My Christ is God*, as it would bear: " I might lay all the world upon it."

God and man in one person! Oh! thrice happy conjunction! As man, he is full of experimental sense of our infirmities, wants, and burdens; and, as God, he can support and supply them all.

Digitized by Google

The aspect of faith upon this wonderful Person, how relieving, how reviving, how abundantly satisfying is it? God will never divorce the believing soul, and its comfort, after he hath married our nature to his own Son, by the hypostatical, and our persons also, by the blessed mystical union.

SERMON VI.

Of the Authority by which CHRIST, as Mediator, acted.

JOHN vi. 27.

For him hath God the Father sealed.

YOU have heard Christ's compact, or agreement with the Father, in the covenant of redemption; as also what the Father did, in pursuance of the ends thereof, in giving his Son out of his bosom, &c. also what the Son hath done towards it, in assuming flesh. But though the glorious work be thus far advanced, yet all he should act in that assumed body, had been invalid and vain, without a due call, and commission from the Father, so to do: which is the import of the words now before you.

This scripture is a part of Christ's excellent reply to a self-ended generation, who followed him, not for any spiritual excellencies that they saw in him, or soul-advantages they expected by him, but for bread. Instead of making his service their meat and drink, they only served him, that they might eat and drink. *Self* is a thing may creep into the best hearts and actions; but it only predominates in the hypocrite. These people had sought Christ from place to place, and having at last found him, they salute him with an impertinent compliment, "Rabbi, whence camest thou "hither?" verse 25. Christ's reply is partly *dissuasive*, and partly *directive*. He dissuades them from putting the secondary and subordinate, in the place of the principal and ultimate end; not to prefer their bodies to their souls, their fleshly accommodations to the glory of God. "Labour not for the meat that perisheth." Wherein he doth not take them off from their lawful labours and callings; but he dissuades them, *first*, from minding those things too intently; and, *secondly*, he dissuades them from that odious sin of making religion but a pretence for the belly.

And it is partly *directive*, and that in the main end and business of life. "But labour for that meat which endureth to eternal life;"

Digitized by Google

to get bread for your ſouls to live eternally by. And, that he might engage their diligence in ſeeking it to purpoſe, he ſhews them not only where they may have it, [" which the Son of man " ſhall give you"] but alſo how they may be fully ſatisfied that he hath it for them, in the clauſe I have pitched on; " For him hath " God the Father ſealed."

In theſe words are three parts obſervable.

1. The Perſon ſealing or inveſting Chriſt with authority and power; which is ſaid to be *God the Father*. Though all the perſons in the Godhead are equal in nature, dignity and power, yet in their operation there is an order obſerved among them; the *Father* ſends the Son, the *Son* is ſent by the Father, the *Holy Ghoſt* is ſent by both.

2. The ſubject in which God the Father lodges this authority, [*Him*] that is, the Son of man. Jeſus Chriſt, he is the πρωτον δεκτικον, the firſt receptacle of it; and he muſt here be underſtood excluſively. God the Father hath ſo ſealed him, as he never ſealed any other before him, or that ſhall ariſe after him. No name is given in heaven, or earth, but this name by which we are ſaved, Acts iv. 12. " The government is upon his ſhoulders," Iſa. ix.

3. Here is farther obſervable, the way and manner of the Father's delegating and committing this authority to Chriſt; and that is, by *ſealing him*. Where we have both a *metonymy*, the ſymbol of authority being put for the authority itſelf, and a *metaphor, ſealing*, which is a human act, for the ratifying and confirming an inſtrument, or grant, being here applied to God. *Like as princes, by ſealed credentials, confirm the authority of thoſe that are ſent by them*; as the Dutch Annotators well expreſs the meaning of it. Hence we note,

Doct. *That Jeſus Chriſt did not of himſelf undertake the work of our redemption, but was ſolemnly ſealed unto that work by God the Father.*

When I ſay, he did not of himſelf undertake this work, I mean not that he was unwilling to go about it, for his heart was as fully and ardently engaged in it, as the Father's was: ſo he tells us, Pſal. xl. 7. "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God; thy law is in my " heart." But the meaning is, he came not without a due call, and full commiſſion from his Father. And ſo it is to be underſtood in oppoſition to intruſion, not voluntary ſuſception; and this is the meaning of that ſcripture, John viii. 24. " I proceeded " and came from God; neither came I of myſelf, but he ſent " me." And this the apoſtle plainly expreſſeth, and fully

Digitized by Google

clears;* Heb. v. 4, 5. "And no man taketh this honour to himself, "but he that is called of God, as was Aaron: so also, Christ glorified "not himself to be made an High-priest; but he that said un- "to him, Thou art my Son." And on the account of these sealed credentials, he received from the Father, he is called the Apostle and High-priest of our profession, Heb. iii. 1. *i. e.* one called and sent forth by the Father's authority. Our present business, then, is to open Christ's commission, and to view the great seal of heaven by which it was ratified.

And, to preserve a clear method in the explication of this great truth, into which your faith and comfort is resolved, I shall,

First, Shew what was the work and office to which the Father sealed him.

Secondly, What his sealing to this work doth imply.

Thirdly, How, and by what acts, the Father sealed him to it.

Fourthly, Why it was necessary that he should be thus sealed and authorized by his Father; and then improve it in its proper uses.

First, What was that office, or work, to which his Father sealed him? I answer, more generally, he was sealed to the whole work of mediation for us, thereby to recover and save all the elect, whom the Father had given him; so John xvii. 2. "It was to "give eternal life to as many as were given him: it was "to bring "Jacob again to him," Isa. xlix. 5. or, as the apostle expresses it, 1 Pet. iii. 18. "That he might bring us to God." More particularly, in order to the sure, and full effecting of this most glorious design, he was sealed to the offices of a Prophet, Priest, and King, that so he might bring about and compass this work.

1. God sealed him a commission to preach the glad tidings of salvation to sinners. This commission Christ opened and read in the audience of the people, Luke iv. 17, 18, 19, 20, 21. "And "when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was "written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath "anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor, he hath sent me "to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the cap- "tives, and the recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty "them that are bruised; to preach the acceptable year of the "Lord. And he closed the book, *&c.* And he began to say un- "to them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears."

2. He also sealed him to the priesthood, and that the most excellent; authorizing him to execute both the parts of it, *viz. oblatory* and *intercessory*. He called him to offer up himself a sacrifice

* That there can be no other thing inferred from this expression of the apostle, but this, that Christ was called to the office of Mediator, by him whose Son he was. *Cameron's Myrothecia*, p. 317.

Digitized by Google

for us. "I have power (saith he) to lay down my life; this "commandment have I received of my Father," John x. 18. And upon that account, his offering up of his blood is, by the apostle, stiled an act of obedience, as it is, Phil. ii. 8. "He became "obedient unto death." He also called him to intercede for us; Heb. vii. 21, 24, 25. "These priests were made without an oath; "but this with an oath; by him that said unto him, The Lord "sware, and will not repent, thou art a priest for ever:" because his sacrifice is virtually continued, in his living for ever to make intercession, as it is, verse 24. Yea,

3. He called him to his regal office; he was set upon the highest throne of authority by his Father's commission, as it is, Matth. xxviii. 18. "All power in heaven and earth is given to me." To all this was Christ sealed and authorized by his Father.

Secondly, What doth the Father's sealing of Christ to this work and office imply? There are divers things implied in it: As,

1. The validity and efficacy of all his mediatory acts. For, by virtue of this his sealing, whatever he did was fully ratified. And in this very thing lies much of a believer's comfort and security; forasmuch as all acts done without commission and authority (how great, or able soever the person that doth them is, yet) are in themselves null and void. But what is done by commission and authority, is authentic, and most allowable among men. Had Christ come from heaven, and entered upon his mediatory work without a due call, our faith had been stumbled at the very threshold; but this greatly satisfies.

2. It imports the great obligation lying upon Jesus Christ to be faithful in the work he was sealed to: for, the Father, in this commission, devolves a great trust upon him, and relies upon him for his most faithful discharge thereof. And, indeed, upon this very account Christ reckons himself specially obliged to pursue the Father's design and end, John ix. 4. "I must work the works of "him that sent me." And John v. 30. "I seek not mine own "will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me." Still his eye is upon that work and will of his Father. And he reckons himself under a necessity of punctual and precise obedience to it; and, as a faithful servant, will have his own will swallowed up in his Father's will.

3. It imports Christ's complete qualification, or instrumental fitness to serve the Father's design and end of our recovery. Had not God known him to be every way fit, and qualified for the work, he would never have sealed him a commission for it. Men may, but God will not seal an unfit, or incapable person, for his work. And, indeed, whatever is desirable in a servant, was eminently found in Christ: for *faithfulness*, none like him. Moses

Digitized by Google

love with holineſs, that at the price of his blood he will buy it for us. Hence the obſervation is;

Doct. *That Jeſus Chriſt did dedicate, and wholly ſet himſelf apart to the work of a Mediator, for the elect's ſake.*

This point is a glaſs, wherein the eye of your faith may ſee Jeſus Chriſt preparing himſelf to be offered up to God for us, fitting himſelf to die. And to keep a clear method, I ſhall open theſe two things, in the doctrinal part; *Firſt*, what his ſanctifying himſelf implies: *Secondly*, How it reſpects us.

Firſt, What is implied in this phraſe, "I ſanctify myſelf," And there are ſeven things carried in it.

1. This phraſe ["I ſanctify myſelf"] implies *the perſonal union of the two natures in Chriſt*; for what is that which he here calls *himſelf*, but the ſame that was conſecrated to be a ſacrifice, even his human nature? This was the ſacrifice. And this alſo was himſelf: So the apoſtle ſpeaks, Heb. ix. 14. "He through the "eternal Spirit, offered up himſelf to God, without ſpot." So that our nature, by that aſſumption, is become himſelf. Greater honour cannot be done it, or greater ground of comfort propoſed to us. But having ſpoken of that union in the former ſermon, ſhall remit the reader thither.

2. This ſanctifying, or conſecrating himſelf to be a ſacrifice for us, implies, *the greatneſs and dreadfulneſs of that breach which ſin made betwixt God and us.* You ſee no leſs a ſacrifice than Chriſt himſelf muſt be ſanctified to make atonement. Judge of the greatneſs of the wound by the breadth of the plaiſter. "Sacrifice "and offering, and burnt-offering for ſin, thou wouldſt not; but "a body haſt thou prepared me," Heb. x. 5. All our repentance, could we ſhed as many tears for ſin, as there have fallen drops of rain ſince the creation, could not have been our atonement: "But God was in Chriſt reconciling the world to himſelf." And had he not ſanctified Chriſt to this end, he would have ſanctified himſelf upon us, in judgment and fury for ever.

3. This his ſanctifying himſelf, implies *his free and voluntary undertaking of the work.* It is not, *I am ſanctified*, as if he had been merely paſſive in it, as the lambs that typed him out were, when pluckt from the fold; but it is an active verb he uſeth here,* *I ſanctify myſelf*; he would have none think that he died out of a neceſſity of compulſion, but out of choice: Therefore he is ſaid to "offer up himſelf to God, Heb. x. 14. And John ix. 18.

* Ἐγω αγιαζω εμαυτον.

Digitized by Google

"I lay down my life of myself: no man taketh it from me." And although it is often said *his Father sent him*, and *gave him*; yet his heart was as much set on that work, as if there had been nothing but glory, ease, and comfort in it; he was under no constraint, but that of his own love. Therefore, as when the scripture would set forth the willingness of the Father to this work, it saith, *God sent his Son*, and *God gave his Son*: so when it would set forth Christ's willingness to it, it saith, *he offered up himself, gave himself*, and, here in the text, *sanctified himself*. The sacrifice that struggled, and came not without force to the altar, was reckoned ominous and unlucky by the Heathen: our Sacrifice dedicated himself; he died out of choice, and was a free-will offering.

4. His sanctifying himself, implies *his pure and perfect holiness; that he had no spot or blemish in him*. Those beasts that prefigured him, were to be without blemish, and none else were consecrated to that service. So, and more than so, it behoved Christ to be, Heb. vii. 26. "Such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners:" And what it became him to be, he was. Therefore, in allusion to the lambs offered under the law, the apostle calls him *a Lamb without blemish, or spot*, 1 Pet. i. 19. Every other man hath a double spot on him, the heart-spot, and the life-spot; the spot of original, and the spots of actual sins. But Christ was without either, he had not the spot of original sin, for he was not by man; he came in a peculiar way into the world, and so escaped that: nor yet of actual sins; for, as his nature, so his life was spotless and pure, Isa. liii. 9. "He "did no iniquity." And though tempted to sin externally, yet he was never defiled in heart or practice; he came as near as he could for our sakes, yet still without sin, Heb. iv. 15. If he sanctifies himself for a sacrifice, he must be as the law required, pure and spotless.

5. His sanctifying himself for our sakes, speaks *the strength of his love, and largeness of his heart to poor sinners, thus to set himself wholly and entirely apart for us*: so that what he did and suffered, must all of it have a respect and relation to us. He did not (when consecrated for us) live a moment, do an act, or speak a word, but it had some tendency to promote the great design of our salvation. He was only and wholly, and always doing your work, when consecrated for your sakes. His incarnation respects you; Isa. ix. 6. "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given." And he would never have been the son of man, but to make you the sons and daughters of God. God would not have come down in the likeness of sinful flesh, in the habit of a man, but to raise up sinful man unto the likeness of God. All the miracles he wrought

Digitized by Google

were for you, to confirm your faith: When he raiſed up Lazarus, John xi. 42. "Becauſe of the people which ſtand by, I ſaid "it, that they might believe that thou hadſt ſent me." While he lived on earth, he lived as one wholly ſet apart for us; and when he died, he died for us, Gal. iii. 13. "he was made a curſe "for us." When he hanged on that curſed tree, he hanged there in our room, and did but fill our place. When he was buried, he was buried for us: for the end of it was, to perfume our graves, againſt we come to lie down in them. And when he roſe again, it was, as the apoſtle ſaith, "for our juſtification," Rom. iv. 25. When he aſcended into glory, he proteſted it was about our buſineſs, that he went *to prepare places for us:* and if it had not been ſo, he would have told us, John xiv. 2. And now he is there, it is for us that he there lives; for "he ever lives to "make interceſſion for us," Heb. vii. 25. And when he ſhall return again to judge the world, he will come for us too. "He "comes (whenever it be) to be glorified in his ſaints, and admired in them that believe," 2 Theſſ. i. 10. He comes to gather his ſaints home to himſelf, that where he is, there they all may be in ſoul and body with him for ever. Thus you ſee how, as his conſecration for us doth ſpeak him ſet apart for our uſe; ſo he did wholly beſtow himſelf, time, life, death, and all upon us; living and dying for no other end, but to accompliſh this great work of ſalvation for us.

6. His ſanctifying himſelf for us plainly ſpeaks the *vicegerency of his death, that it was in our room or ſtead.* When the prieſt conſecrated the ſacrifice, it was ſet apart for the people. So it is ſaid of the ſcape-goat; "And Aaron ſhall lay both his hands upon "the head of the live goat, and confeſs over him all the iniquities "of the children of Iſrael, and all their tranſgreſſions in all their "ſins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and ſhall ſend "him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderneſs," Levit. xvi. 21. Thus Iſa. liii. 6, 7. He ſtood in our room, to bear our burden. And as Aaron laid the iniquities of the people upon the goat, ſo were ours laid on Chriſt; it was ſaid to him in that day, On thee be their pride, their unbelief, their hardneſs of heart, their vain thoughts, their earthly-mindedneſs, &c. Thou art conſecrated for them, to be the ſacrifice in their room. His death was in our ſtead, as well as for our good. And ſo much his ſanctifying himſelf [for us] imports.

7. His ſanctifying himſelf, imports *the extraordinarineſs of his perſon: for it ſpeaks him to be both Prieſt, Sacrifice, and Altar, all in one: a thing unheard of in the world before.* So that his name might well be called *Wonderful. I ſanctify myſelf:* I ſanctify, according to both natures; myſelf, *i. e.* my human nature, which was the ſa-

Digitized by Google

crifice upon the altar of my divine nature; for it is the altar that ſanctifies the gift. As the three offices never met in one perſon before, ſo theſe three things never met in one prieſt before. The prieſts indeed conſecrated the bodies of beaſts for ſacrifices, but never offered up their own ſouls and bodies as a whole burnt-offering, as Chriſt did. And thus you have the import of this phraſe, *I ſanctify myſelf for their ſakes.*

Secondly, I ſhall ſhew you briefly the habitude and reſpect that all this hath to us; for unto us the ſcriptures every where refer it. So in 1 Cor. v. 7. "Chriſt our paſſover is ſacrificed for us." Eph. v. 2. "He loved the church, and gave himſelf for it." See Tit. ii. 14. This will be made out, by a threefold conſideration of Chriſt's death. And,

1. Let it be conſidered, that *he was not offered up to God for his own ſins*; for he was moſt holy. Iſa. liii. 9. No iniquity was found in him. Indeed, the prieſts under the law offered for themſelves, as well as the people; but Chriſt did not ſo, Heb. vii. 27. "He needed not daily, as thoſe High-prieſts, to offer up ſacrifice, "firſt for his own ſins, and then for the people's." And indeed had he been a ſinner, what value or efficacy could have been in his ſacrifice? He could not have been the ſacrifice, but would have needed one. Now, if Chriſt were moſt holy, and yet put to death, and cruel ſufferings, either his death or ſufferings muſt be an act of injuſtice and cruelty, or it muſt reſpect others, whoſe perſons and cauſe he ſuſtained in that ſuffering capacity. He could never have ſuffered or died by the Father's hand, had he not been a ſinner by imputation. And in that reſpect, as Luther ſpeaks, he was the greateſt of ſinners; or, as the prophet Iſaiah ſpeaks, all *our ſins were made to meet upon him*; not that he was intrinſically, but was made ſo, *ſo*, by imputation, as is clear from 2 Cor. v. 21. "He was made ſin for us, who knew no ſin." So that hence it is evident, that Chriſt's death, or ſacrifice, is wholly a reſpective or relative thing.

2. It is not to be forgotten here, that the ſcriptures frequently call the death of Chriſt *a price*, 1 Cor. vi. 20. and *a ranſom*, Mat. xx. 28. or counterprice*. To whom then doth it relate, but to them that were, and are in bondage and captivity? If it was to redeem any, it muſt be captives: but Chriſt himſelf was never in captivity; he was always in his Father's boſom, as you have heard; but we were in cruel bondage and thraldom, under the tyranny of ſin and Satan: and it is we only that have the benefit of this ranſom.

3. Either the death of Chriſt muſt relate to believers, or elſe he

* Λυτρον, αντιλυτρον, i. e. *pretium, pretium ex adverſo reſpondens.*

Digitized by Google

muſt die in vain. As for the angels, thoſe that ſtood in their integrity, needed no ſacrifice, and thoſe that fell, are totally excluded from any benefit by it: he is not a Mediator for them. And among men that have need of it, unbelievers have no ſhare in it, they reject it; ſuch have no part in it. If then he neither died for himſelf, as I proved before, nor for angels, nor unbelievers; either his blood muſt be ſhed with reſpect to believers, or, which is moſt abſurd, and never to be imagined, ſhed as water upon the ground, and totally caſt away; ſo that you ſee by all this, it was for our ſakes, as the text ſpeaks, that he ſanctified himſelf. And now we may ſay, Lord, the *condemnation* was thine, that the *juſtification* might be mine; the *agony* thine, that the *victory* might be mine; the *pain* was thine, and the *eaſe* mine; the *ſtripes* thine, and the *healing balm* iſſuing from them mine; the *vinegar* and *gall* were thine, that the *honey* and *ſweet* might be mine; the *curſe* was thine, that the *bleſſing* might be mine; the *crown of thorns* was thine, that the *crown of glory* might be mine; the *death* was thine, the *life* purchaſed by it mine; thou paidſt the *price* that I might enjoy the *inheritance*.

We come next to the inferences of truth deducible from this point, which follow.

Inference 1. If Jeſus Chriſt did wholly ſet himſelf apart for believers, *how reaſonable is it that believers ſhould conſecrate and ſet themſelves apart wholly for Chriſt?* Is he all for us, and ſhall we be nothing for him? What he was, he was for you? Whatever he did, was done for you; and all that he ſuffered, was ſuffered for you. O then, "I beſeech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, preſent your bodies," *i. e.* your whole ſelves, (for ſo body is there* ſynecdochically put to ſignify the whole perſon) I ſay, "preſent your bodies a living ſacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reaſonable ſervice," Rom. xii. 1. As your good was Chriſt's end, ſo let his glory be your end. Let Chriſt be the "end of your converſation," Heb. xiii. 7. As Chriſt could ſay, To me to live is you; ſo do you ſay, "For us to live is Chriſt," Phil. i. 21. O that all who profeſs faith in Chriſt, could ſubſcribe cordially to that profeſſion, Rom. xiv. 8. "None of us liveth to himſelf, and no man dieth to himſelf; but whether we live, we live to the Lord; and whether we die, we die to the Lord; ſo then whether we live or die, we are the Lord's." This is to be a Chriſtian indeed. What is a Chriſtian, but an holy dedicated thing to the Lord? And what greater evidence can there be,

* *Synecdoche Hebraica, pro vos-met ipſos totos;* i. e. your whole perſons. *Sic* Parens in loc.

Digitized by Google

that Christ set himself apart for you, than your setting yourselves apart for him?

This is the marriage-covenant, Hos. iii. 3. "Thou shalt be for "me, and not for another; so will I be for thee." Ah, what a life is the life of a Christian; Christ all for you, and you all for him. Blessed exchange! Soul, (saith Christ) all I have is thine. Lord, (saith the soul) and all I have is thine. Soul, (saith Christ) my person is wonderful, but what I am, I am for thee: my life was spent in labour and travail, but lived for thee. And Lord, (saith the believer), my person is vile, and not worth thy accepting; but such as it is, it is thine; my soul, with all and every faculty; my body, and every member of it, my gifts, time, and all my talents are thine.

And see that as Christ bequeathed and made over himself to you, so ye, in like manner, bestow and make over yourselves to him. He lived not, neither died (as you hear) for himself, but you. O that you, in like manner, would down with self, and exalt Christ in the room of it. 'Wo, wo is me, (saith one) that 'the holy profession of Christ is made a shewy garment by many 'to bring home a vain fame; and Christ is made to serve men's 'ends. This is to stop an oven with a king's robes. Except men 'martyr and slay the body of sin, in sanctified self-denial, they 'shall never be Christ's martyrs and faithful witnesses. O if I 'could be master of that house-idol, myself, mine own, mine 'own wit, will, credit, and ease, how blessed were I! O but we 'have need to be redeemed from ourselves, rather than from the 'devil and the world. Learn to put out yourselves, and to put 'in Christ for yourselves. I should make a sweet bargain, and 'and give old for new, if I could shuffle out self, and substitute 'Christ my Lord in place of my self; to say, not I, but Christ; 'not my will, but Christ's; not my ease, not my lusts, not my 'credit, but Christ, Christ.—O wretched idol, *myself*, when shall 'I see thee wholly decourted, and Christ wholly put in thy room? 'O if Christ had the full place and room of myself, that all my 'aims, purposes, thoughts and desires would coast and land upon 'Christ, and not upon myself.'

He set himself apart for you believers, and no others; no, not for angels, but for you: Will ye also set yourselves apart peculiarly for Christ? be his, and no other's? Let not Christ and the world share and divide your hearts in two halves betwixt them; let not the world step in and say, half mine. You will never do Christ right, nor answer this grace, till you can say, as it is, Psal. lxxiii. 25. "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and on earth "there is none that I desire in comparison of thee." None but Christ, none but Christ, is a proper motto for a Christian.

Digitized by Google

He left the higheſt and beſt enjoyments, even thoſe in his Father's boſom, to ſet himſelf apart for death and ſuffering for you: Are you ready to leave the boſom of the beſt and ſweeteſt enjoyments, you have in this world, to ſerve him? If you ſtand not habitually ready to leave father, mother, wife, children, lands, yea, and life too, to ſerve him, you are not worthy of him, Matt. x. 37.

He was ſo wholly given up to your ſervice, that he refuſed not the worſt and hardeſt part of it, even bleeding, groaning, dying-work; his love to you ſweetened all this to him; Can you ſay ſo too; do you "account the reproaches of Chriſt greater riches "than the treaſures of Egypt, as Moſes did?" Heb. xi. 26.

He had ſo entirely devoted himſelf to your work, that he could not be at reſt till it was finiſhed: he was ſo intent upon it, that he "forgot to eat bread," John iv. 31, 32. So it ſhould be with you; his ſervice ſhould be meat and drink to you. To conclude:

He was ſo wholly given up to your work and ſervice, that he would not ſuffer himſelf to be in the leaſt diverted, or taken off from it: and if Peter himſelf counſel him to favour himſelf, he ſhall hear, "Get thee behind me, Satan." O happy were it if our hearts were but ſo engaged for Chriſt! In Galen's time it was proverbial, when they would expreſs the impoſſibility of a thing, *You may as ſoon take off a Chriſtian from Chriſt.* Thus you ſee what uſe you ſhould make of Chriſt's ſanctifying himſelf for you.

Inf. 2. If Chriſt hath ſanctified or conſecrated himſelf for us; learn hence, *what a horrid evil it is, to uſe Chriſt or his blood, as a common and unſanctified thing.* Yet ſo ſome do, as the apoſtle ſpeaks, Heb. x. 29. The apoſtate is ſaid to tread upon the Son of God, as if he were no better than the dirt under his feet, and to count his blood an unholy (or common) thing. But wo to them that do ſo, they ſhall be counted worthy of ſomething worſe than dying without mercy, as the apoſtle there ſpeaks.

And as this is the ſin of the apoſtate, ſo it is alſo the ſin of all thoſe that without faith approach, and ſo profane the table of the Lord, unbelievingly and unworthily handling thoſe awful things. Such "eat and drink judgment to themſelves, not diſcerning the "Lord's body," 1 Cor. xi. 29. Whereas the body of Chriſt was a thing of the deepeſt ſanctification that ever God created; ſanctified (as the text tells us) to a far more excellent and glorious purpoſe than ever any creature in heaven or earth was ſanctified. It was therefore the great ſin of thoſe Corinthians, not to diſcern it, and not to behave themſelves towards it, when they ſaw and handled the ſigns of it, as became ſo holy a thing.

And as it was their great ſin, ſo God declared his juſt indignation againſt it, in thoſe ſore ſtrokes inflicted for it. As they diſ-

Digitized by Google

cerned not the Lord's body, ſo neither did the Lord diſcern their bodies from others in the judgments that were inflicted. And, as one well obſerves, God drew the model and platform of their puniſhment, from the ſtructure and proportion of their ſin. And truly, if the moral and ſpiritual ſeeds and originals of many of our outward afflictions and ſickneſſes were but duly ſifted out, poſſibly we might find a great part of them in the bowels of this ſin.

The juſt and righteous God will build up the breaches we make upon the honour of his Son, with the ruins of that beauty, ſtrength and honour which he hath given our bodies. O then, when you draw nigh to God in that ordinance, take heed to ſanctify his name, by a ſpiritual diſcerning of this moſt holy, and moſt deeply ſanctified body of the Lord; ſanctified beyond all creatures, angels or men, not only in reſpect of the Spirit which filled him, without meaſure with inherent holineſs, but alſo in reſpect of its dedication to ſuch a ſervice as this, it being ſet apart by him to ſuch holy, ſolemn ends and uſes, as you have heard.

And let it, for ever, be a warning to ſuch as have lifted up their hands to Chriſt in a holy profeſſion, that they never lift up their heel againſt him afterwards by apoſtaſy. The apoſtate treads on God's dear Son, and God will tread upon him for it. "Thou "haſt trodden down all that err from thy ſtatutes," Pſal. cxix. 118.

Inf. 3. *What a choice pattern of love to ſaints have we here before us!* Calling all that are in Chriſt to an imitation of him, even to give up ourſelves to their ſervice, as Chriſt did; not in the ſame kind, ſo none can give himſelf for them, but as we are capable. You ſee here how his heart was affected to them, that he would ſanctify himſelf as a ſacrifice for them. See to what a height of duty the apoſtle improves this example of Chriſt, 1 John iii. 16. "Hereby perceive we the love of God, becauſe he laid down his "life for us; and we ought alſo to lay down our lives for the "brethren." Some Chriſtians came up fairly to this pattern in primitive times; Priſcilla and Aquila laid down their necks for Paul, Rom. xvi. 4. i. e. eminently hazarded their lives for him; and he himſelf could "rejoice, if he were offered up upon the ſa-"crifice and ſervice of their faith," Phil. ii. 17. And in the next times, what more known, even to the enemies of Chriſtianity, than their fervent love one to another? *Ecce quam mutuo ſe diligunt, et mori volunt pro alterutris!* See how they love one another, and are willing to die one for another!

But alas! the primitive ſpirit is almoſt loſt in this degenerate age: inſtead of laying down life, how few will lay down twelvepence for them? I remember, it is the obſervation of a late Wor-

Digitized by Google

indeed was faithful to a pin, but ſtill as a ſervant; but Chriſt as a Son, Heb. iii. 2. He is the faithful and true witneſs, Rev. i. 5. For *zeal*, none like him. The zeal of God's houſe did eat him up, John ii. 16, 17. He was ſo intent upon his Father's work, that he forgot to eat bread, counting his work his meat and drink, John iv. 32. Yea, and love to his Father carried him on through all his work, and made him delight in the hardeſt piece of his ſervice; for he ſerved him as a Son, Heb. iii. 5, 6. All that ever he did was done in love. For *wiſdom*, none like him. The Father knew him to be moſt wiſe, and ſaid of him before he was employed, "Be- "hold my ſervant ſhall deal prudently," Iſa. lii. 13. To conclude, for *ſelf-denial*, never any like him; he ſought not his own glory, but the glory of him that ſent him, John viii. 50. Had he not been thus faithful, zealous, full of love, prudent, and ſelf-denying, he had never been employed in this great affair.

4. It implies Chriſt's ſole authority in the church, to appoint and enjoin what he pleaſeth; and this is his peculiar prerogative. For, the commiſſion God ſealed him in the text, is a ſingle, not a joint commiſſion; he hath ſealed him, and none beſide him. Indeed there were ſome that pretended a call and commiſſion from God; but all that were before him were thieves and robbers,* that came not in at the door, as he did, John x. 8. And he himſelf foretels, that after him ſome ſhould ariſe, and labour to deceive the world with a feigned commiſſion, and a counterfeit ſeal, Matth. xxiv. 24. "There ſhall ariſe falſe Chriſts, and falſe pro- "phets, and ſhall ſhew great ſigns and wonders; inſomuch, that "if it were poſſible, they ſhould deceive the very elect." But God never commiſſioned any beſides him, neither is there any other name under heaven, Acts iv. 12. Thus you ſee how the validity of his acts, his obligation to be faithful, his complete qualifications, and ſole authority in the church, are imported in his ſealing.

Thirdly, Let us enquire how God the Father ſealed Jeſus Chriſt to this work, and we ſhall find that he was ſealed by four acts of the Father.

1. *By ſolemn deſignation to this work.* He ſingled him out and ſet him apart for it: and therefore the prophet Iſaiah, chap. xlii. 1. calls him *God's elect*.† And the apoſtle Peter, 1 Pet. ii. 4. *Choſen of God*. This word which we render *Elect*,‡ doth not only ſignify

* All that came before me (that is, whom I did not ſend, but who ran unſent, giving themſelves out for the Meſſiah) are thieves and robbers; after their guileful manner, they have contrived certain falſe doors to heaven, by which they have thrown men down headlong into the abyſs of everlaſting miſery. *Dieterieus.*

† בחירי Elect, *i. e.* choice, ſurpaſſing, excellent.

‡ See the *Dutch annotations* on this place.

Digitized by Google

one that in himſelf is eximious, worthy, and excellent, but alſo one that is ſet apart and deſigned, as Chriſt was, for the work of mediation. And ſo much is included in John x. 36. where the Father is ſaid to ſanctify him, *i. e.* to ſeparate, and devote him to this ſervice.

2. He was ſealed, not only by ſolemn deſignation, but alſo *ſupereminent and unparalleled ſanctification.* He was anointed, as well as appointed to it. The Lord filled him with the Spirit, and that without meaſure, to qualify him for this ſervice. So Iſa. lxi. 1, 2, 3. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, becauſe he hath anointed me to preach," &c. Yea, the Spirit of the Lord was not only upon him, but he was full of the Spirit, Luke iv. 1. and ſo full as was never any beſide him; for God "anointed him with the oil of gladneſs, above his fellows," Pſalm xlv. 7. Believers are his fellows, or co-partners of this Spirit: * they have an anointing alſo, but not as Chriſt had; † in him it dwelt in its fulneſs, in them according to meaſure. It was poured out on Chriſt, our Head, abundantly, and ran down to the hem of his garment. "God gave "not the Spirit to him by meaſure," John iii. 34. God filled Chriſt's human nature, to the utmoſt capacity, with all fulneſs of the Spirit of knowledge, wiſdom, love, &c. beyond all creatures, for the plenary and more effectual adminiſtration of his mediatorſhip: he was full *extenſively*, with all kinds of grace; and full *intenſively*, with all degrees of grace. "It pleaſed the Father "that in him ſhould all fulneſs dwell, Col. i. 19. as light in the ſun, or water in a fountain, that he might not only *fill all things*, as the apoſtle ſpeaks, Eph. i. 22. but that he might be prompt, expedite, and every way fit to diſcharge his own work, which was the next and immediate end of it: ſo that the holy oil that was poured out upon the head of kings and prieſts, whereby they were conſecrated to their offices, was but typical of the Spirit, by which Chriſt was conſecrated, or ſealed, to his offices‡.

3. Chriſt was ſealed *by the Father's immediate teſtimony from heaven, whereby he was declared to be the perſon whom the Father had ſolemnly deſigned and appointed to this work.* And God gave this extraordinary teſtimony of him at two remarkable ſeaſons; the one was juſt at his entrance on his public miniſtry, Mat. iii. ult. the

* From Chriſt come the name Chriſtians, which is as much as to ſay, Partakers of an holy unction: True Chriſtians have not merely the name without the thing; but they who are called by the name of Chriſtians have the anointing which the name imports. *Glaſſ.*

† Theſe gifts, conſidered abſolutely, and in themſelves, were finite; even as the human nature of Chriſt itſelf was finite; yet in reſpect of us, they were indeed without meaſure. *Dr. Alt. Explication of the Catechiſm.* Part II. p. 170.

‡ Exod. xxx. 23, 24, 25, 30, 31, 32.

Digitized by Google

other but a little before his ſufferings, Mat. xvii. 5. This voice was not formed by ſuch organs and inſtruments of ſpeech as ours are, but by creating a voice in the air* which the people heard ſounding therein: by this God owned, approved, and as by a ſeal ratified his work.

4. Chriſt was ſealed by the Father, *in all thoſe extraordinary miraculous works wrought by him*, in which the Father gave yet more full and convincing teſtimonies to the world, that this was he whom he had appointed to be our Mediator. Theſe were convictive to the world, that God had ſent him, and that his doctrine was of God. "God anointed Jeſus of Nazareth with the Holy "Ghoſt and power, who went about doing good, and healing all "that were oppreſſed of the devil; for God was with him," Acts x. 38. And ſo, John v. 36. "I have a greater witneſs than that "of John; for the works which the Father hath given me to "finiſh, the ſame works that I do, bear witneſs of me, that the "Father hath ſent me." Therefore he ſtill referred thoſe that doubted of him, or of his doctrine, to the ſeal of his Father, even the miraculous works he wrought in the power of God, Mat. xi. 3, 4, 5. And thus the Father ſealed him.

Fourthly and *laſtly*, We will enquire why it was neceſſary Chriſt ſhould be ſealed by his Father to this work: and there are theſe three weighty reaſons for it.

1. *Elſe he had not correſponded with the types which prefigured him, and in him it was neceſſary that they ſhould be all accompliſhed.* You know, under the Law, the kings and high prieſts had their inaugurations by ſolemn unctions; in all which this conſecration, or ſealing of Chriſt to his work, was ſhadowed out: and therefore you ſhall find, Heb. v. 4, 5. "No man taketh this honour to "himſelf, but he that is called of God as was Aaron: ſo alſo" (mark the neceſſary correſpondency betwixt Chriſt and them) "Chriſt glorified not himſelf, to be made an High Prieſt; but he "that ſaid unto him, Thou art my Son."

2. Moreover, *hereby the hearts of believers are the more engaged to love the Father, inaſmuch as it appears hereby that the Father's love, and good will to them, was the original and ſpring of their redemption.* For had not the Father ſealed him ſuch a commiſſion, he had not come; but now he comes in the Father's name, and in the Father's love, as well as his name; and ſo all men are bound to aſcribe equal glory and honour to them both: as it is, John v. 23.

3. And eſpecially Chriſt would not come without a commiſſion, becauſe, *elſe you had no ground for your faith in him.* How ſhould we have been *ſatisfied*, that this is indeed the true Meſſiah,

* Caryl on Job i. 7.

Digitized by Google

except he had opened his commiſſion to the world, and ſhew'd his Father's ſeal annexed to it? If he had come without his *credentials* from heaven, and only told the world that God had ſent him, and that they muſt take his bare word for it, who could have reſted his faith on that teſtimony? And that is the true meaning of that place, John v. 31. "If I bear witneſs of myſelf, my witneſs "is not true." How ſo? You will ſay, doth not that contradict what he ſaith, John viii. 14. "Though I bear record of myſelf, yet "my record is true." Therefore you muſt underſtand truth, not as it is oppoſed to *reality*; but the meaning is, if I had only given you my bare word for it, and not brought other evidence from my Father, my teſtimony had not been authentic and valid, according to human laws; but now all doubtings are precluded. Let us next improve this.

Inf. 1. Hence we infer the *unreaſonableneſs of infidelity*, and how little rejecters of Chriſt can have to pretend for their ſo doing. You ſee he hath opened his commiſſion in the goſpel, ſhewn the world his Father's hand and ſeal to it, given as ample ſatisfaction as reaſon itſelf could deſire, or expect; yet even his own received him not, John i. 11. And he knew it before-hand, and therefore complained by the prophet, Iſa. liii. 1. "Who hath believed our report?" &c. Yea, and that he is believed on in the world, is by the apoſtle put among the great myſteries of godlineſs, 1 Tim. iii. 16. A man that well conſiders with what convincing evidence Chriſt comes, would rather think it a myſtery, that any ſhould not believe. But, Oh the brutiſh obſtinacy, and deviliſh enmity, that is in nature to Jeſus Chriſt! Deviliſh did I ſay? You muſt give me that word again, for he compelled the devil's aſſent; "We "know thee, whom thou art." And it is equally as wonderful to ſee the facility that is in nature to comply (meanwhile) with any, even the moſt fooliſh impoſture. Let a falſe Chriſt ariſe, and he ſhall deceive many, as it is, Matth. xxiv. 24. Of this Chriſt complains, and not without great reaſon, John v. 43. "I am come in "my Father's name, and ye receive me not: If another come in "his own name, him will ye receive," *q. d.* You are incredulous to none but me: every deceiver, every pitiful cheat, that hath but wit, or rather wickedneſs, enough to tell you the Lord hath ſent him, though you muſt take his own ſingle word for it, he ſhall obtain and get diſciples; but though I come in my Father's name, *i. e.* ſhewing you a commiſſion ſigned and ſealed by him, doing thoſe works which none but a God can do, yet ye receive me not. But in all this, we muſt adore the juſtice of God, permitting it to be ſo, giving men up to ſuch unreaſonable obſtinacy and hardneſs. It is a ſore plague that lies upon the world, and a wonder that we all are not ingulphed in the ſame infidelity.

Inf. 2. If Chriſt was ſealed to his work by his Father, then *how*

Digitized by Google

great is the ſin of thoſe that reject and deſpiſe ſuch as are ſent and ſealed by Jeſus Chriſt? For look, as he came to us in his Father's name, ſo he hath ſent forth, by the ſame authority, miniſters in his name;* and as he acts in his Father's, ſo they in his authority. "As thou haſt ſent me into the world, even ſo have I alſo ſent "them into the world," John xvii. 18. And ſo, John xx. 21. "As my Father hath ſent me, ſo have I ſent you." You may think it a ſmall matter to deſpiſe or reject a miniſter of Chriſt (a ſin, in the guilt whereof, I think no age hath been plunged deeper than this); but hear, and let it be a warning to you for ever: in ſo doing you deſpiſe, and put the ſlight both upon the Father that ſent Jeſus, and upon Chriſt that ſent them: ſo that it is a rebellion, that however it ſeems to begin low in ſome ſmall piques againſt their perſons, or ſome little quarrels at their parts and utterance, tones, methods or geſtures; yet it runs high, even to the fountain-head of the moſt ſupreme authority. You that ſet yourſelves againſt a miniſter of Chriſt, ſet yourſelves againſt God the Father, and God the Son; Luke x. 16. "He that heareth you, "heareth me; and he that deſpiſeth you, deſpiſeth me; and he "that deſpiſeth me, deſpiſeth him that ſent me." God expects that you behave yourſelves, under the word ſpoken by us, as if he himſelf ſpake it; yea, he expects ſubmiſſion to his word in the mouths of his miniſters from the greateſt on earth. And therefore it was that God ſo ſeverely puniſhed Zedekiah, "becauſe he hum-"bled not himſelf before Jeremiah the prophet, ſpeaking from "the mouth of the Lord, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 12. God was angry with a great king for not humbling himſelf before a poor prophet. Yet here you muſt diſtinguiſh both of *Perſons*, and of *Acts*.† This reverence and ſubmiſſion is not due to them as men, but as men in office, as Chriſt's ambaſſadors; and muſt involve that reſpect ſtill in it. Again, we owe it not to them, commanding or forbidding in their own names, but in Chriſt's, not in venting their own ſpleen, but the terrors of the Lord; and then to reſiſt is a high rebellion and affront to the ſovereign authority of heaven. And, by the way, this may inſtruct miniſters, that the way to maintain that veneration and reſpect that is due to them, in the conſciences of their hearers, is by keeping cloſe to their commiſſion.

* This form of the miſſion of the Apoſtles by Chriſt, evidently enough ſhews the dignity of their office, in their authority and power, which was ſupreme and incomparable. *Cameron.*

† As if a maſter of a family ſhould firſt preſcribe to his ſervant what he ſhould order to be done in the family, and then ſhould ſay, Whoſo heareth you, heareth me; it would not thence follow that it is impoſſible for that ſervant to depart from what his Maſter had preſcribed to him; or when ever he ſhould do ſo, he ſhould be obeyed. *Cameron, Myroth.* p. 130

Digitized by Google

Inf. 3. Hence alſo we infer, *how great an evil it is to intrude into the office of the miniſtry, without a due call.* It is more than Chriſt himſelf would do; he glorified not himſelf: the honours and advantages attending that office, have invited many, to run before they were ſent. But ſurely this is an inſufferable violation of Chriſt's order. Our age hath abounded with as many church-levellers as ſtate-levellers. I wiſh the miniſters of Chriſt might at laſt ſee and conſider, what they were once warned of by a faithful watchman: 'I believe *(ſaith he*)* God hath permitted ſo many 'to intrude into the miniſters calling, becauſe miniſters have too 'much meddled with, and intruded into other men's callings.'

Inf. 4. Hence be convinced of *the great efficacy that is in all goſpel ordinances duly adminiſtered:* For Chriſt having received full commiſſion from his Father, and by virtue thereof having inſtituted and appointed theſe ordinances in the church, all the power in heaven is engaged to make them good, to back and ſecond them, to confirm and ratify them. Hence, in the cenſures of the church you have that great expreſſion, Matth. xviii. 18. "Whatſoever ye "bind or looſe on earth, ſhall be bound or looſed in heaven." And ſo, for the word and ſacraments, Matth. xxviii. 18, 19, 20. "All power in heaven and earth is given unto me: Go therefore," &c. They are not the appointments of men; your faith ſtands not in the wiſdom of men, but in the power of God. That very power, God the Father committed to Chriſt, is the fountain whence all goſpel inſtitutions flow. And he hath promiſed to be with his officers, not only the extraordinary officers of that age, but with his miniſters, in ſucceeding ages, to the end of the world. O therefore, when we come to an ordinance, come not with ſlight thoughts, but with great reverence, and great expectations, remembering Chriſt is there to make all good.

Inf. 5. Again, here you have *another call to admire the grace and love, both of the Father and Son to your ſouls:* It is not lawful to compare them, but it is duty to admire them. Was it not wonderful grace in the Father, to ſeal a commiſſion for the death of his Son, for the humbling him as low as hell, and in that method to ſave you, when you might have expected he ſhould have ſealed your *Mittimus* for hell, rather than a commiſſion for your ſalvation? he might rather have ſet his irreverſible ſeal to the ſentence of your damnation, than to a commiſſion for his Son's humiliation for you. And no leſs is the love of Chriſt to be wondered at, that would accept ſuch a commiſſion, as this for us, and receive this ſeal, underſtanding fully (as he did) what were the contents

* Mr Strong.

Digitized by Google

of that commiſſion, that the Father delivered him thus ſealed, and knowing that there could be no reverſing of it afterwards.

O then, love the Lord Jeſus, all ye his ſaints, for ſtill you ſee more and more of his love breaking out upon you. I commend to you a ſealed Saviour this day; O that every one that reads theſe lines might, in a pang of love, cry out with the enamoured ſpouſe, Cant. viii. 6. "Set me as a ſeal upon thy heart, as a ſeal upon thy "arm; for love is ſtrong as death, jealouſy is cruel as the grave; "the coals thereof are coals of fire, which have a moſt vehement "flame."

Inf. 6. Once more; Hath God ſealed Chriſt for you? *Then draw forth the comfort of his ſealing for you, and be reſtleſs till ye alſo be ſealed by him.*

1. Draw out the comfort of Chriſt's ſealing for you. Remember that hereby God ſtands engaged, even by his own ſeal, to allow and confirm whatever Chriſt hath done in the buſineſs of our ſalvation. And on this ground you may thus plead with God: Lord, thou haſt ſealed Chriſt to this office, and therefore I depend upon it, that thou alloweſt all that he hath done, and all that he hath ſuffered for me, and wilt make good all that he hath promiſed me. If men will not deny their own ſeals, much leſs wilt thou.

2. Get your intereſt in Chriſt ſealed to you by the Spirit, elſe you cannot have the comfort of Chriſt's being ſealed for you. Now the Spirit ſeals two ways, *Objectively* and *Effectually*; the firſt is by working thoſe graces in us, which are the conditions of the promiſes: the latter is by ſhining upon his own work, and helping the ſoul to diſcern it, which follows the other, both in order of nature, and of time. And theſe ſealings of the Spirit are to be diſtinguiſhed, both *ex parte ſubjecti*, or the quality of the perſon ſealed, which always is a believer, Eph. i. 13. for there can be no reflex, till there have been a *direct Act* of faith; and *ex parte materiæ*, by the matter of which that comfort is made: which if it be of the Spirit, is ever conſonant to the written word, Iſa. viii. 20. And partly *ab effectis*, by its effects: for it commonly produces in the ſealed ſoul, great care and caution to avoid ſin, Eph. iv. 30. Great love to God, John xiv. 22. Readineſs to ſuffer any thing for Chriſt, Rom. v. 3, 4, 5. Confidence in addreſſes to God, 1 John v. 13, 14. and great humility and ſelf-abaſement; as in Abraham, who lay on his face when God ſealed the covenant to him, Gen. xvii 1, 2, 3. This, O this brings home the ſweet and good of all, when this ſeal is ſuper-added to that.

Digitized by Google

SERMON VII.

Of the Solemn Consecration of the Mediator.

John xvii. 19.

And for their sakes I sanctify myself.

JESUS Christ being fitted with a body, and authorized by a commission, now actually devotes, and sets himself apart to his work. In the former sermon you heard what the Father did; in this you shall hear what the Son hath done towards the farther advancement of that glorious design of our salvation: *He sanctified himself for our sakes.* Wherein observe, (1.) Christ's sanctifying of himself. (2.) The end or design of his so doing.

1. You have Christ's sanctifying of himself. The word ἁγιάζω is not here to be understood for the cleansing, purifying, or making holy that which was before unclean and unholy, either in a moral sense, as we are cleansed from sin by sanctification; or in a ceremonial sense, as persons and things were sanctified under the law; though here is a plain allusion to those legal rites; But Christ's sanctifying himself, imports, (1.) His *separation, or setting apart to be an oblation or sacrifice.* So Beza, *nempe ut sacerdos et victima,* as the priest and sacrifice. I sanctify myself, imports, (2.) His *consecration, or dedication of himself to this holy use and service.** So the Dutch Annotations, I sanctify myself (i. e.) *I give up myself for a holy sacrifice.* And so our English Annotations, *I sanctify,* (i. e.) I consecrate and voluntarily offer myself a holy and unblemished sacrifice to thee for their redemption. And thus under the Law, when any day, person, or vessel, was consecrated and dedicated to the Lord, it was so entirely for his use and service, that to use it afterward in any common service, was to profane and pollute it, as you see Dan. v. 3.

2. The end of his so sanctifying himself [*for their sakes,* and *that they might be sanctified*†] where you have the *Finis cujus,* the end for whom, for their (i. e.) for the elects sake, for them whom thou gavest me; and the *Finis cui,* the end for which, that they might be sanctified. Where you also see that the death of Christ wholly respects us; he offered not for himself as other priests did, but for us, that we may be sanctified. Christ is so in

* To sanctify, is to separate or set apart for divine uses. *Brentius* on this place.

† The meaning then is this, I sanctify myself, *i. e.* for their sakes I die, that they by my death may be filled with the Spirit of holiness, and may become holy vessels of God, by the Spirit of God revealed. *Marlorat.* on this place.

Digitized by Google

thy, upon Mat. v. 44. That he is perſuaded there is hardly that man to be found this day alive, that fully underſtands and fully believes that ſcripture. O, did men think what they do for them, is done for Chriſt himſelf, it would produce other effects than are yet viſible.

Infer. 4. *Laſtly*, If Chriſt ſanctified himſelf, that we might be ſanctified by [or in] the truth: then it will follow, by ſound conſequence, *That true ſanctification is a good evidence that Chriſt ſet apart himſelf to die for us.* In vain did he ſanctify himſelf (as to you) unleſs you be ſanctified.* Holy ſouls only can claim the benefit of the great Sacrifice. O try then, whether true holineſs (and that is only to be judged by its conformity to its pattern, 1 Pet. i. 15. "As he that called you is holy, ſo be ye holy"); whether ſuch a holineſs as is, and acts (according to its meaſure) like God's holineſs, in the following particulars, be found in you.

1. God is *univerſally holy* in all his ways; ſo Pſal. cxlv. 17. "His works are all holy:" whatever he doth, it is ſtill done as becomes a holy God: he is not only holy in all things, but at all times unchangeably holy. Be ye therefore holy in all things, and at all times too, if ever you expect the benefit of Chriſt's ſanctifying himſelf to die for you.

O brethren, let not the feet of your converſation be as the feet of a lame man, which are unequal, Prov. xx. 7. Be not ſometimes hot, and ſometimes cold; at one time careful, at another time careleſs; one day in a ſpiritual rapture, and the next in a fleſhly frolic: but be ye holy ἐν πάσῃ ἀναστροφῇ, 1 Pet. i. 15. "in all "manner of converſation," in every creek and turning of your lives: and let your holineſs hold out to the end. "Let him that "is holy, be holy ſtill," Rev. xxi. 11. Not like the hypocrite's paint, but as a true natural complection.

2. God is *examplarily* holy, Jeſus Chriſt is the great pattern of holineſs. Be ye examples of holineſs too, unto all that are about you. "Let your light ſo ſhine before men, that they may ſee "your good works," Matth. v. 16. As wicked men infect one another by their examples, and diffuſe their poiſon and malignity, wherever they come; ſo do ye diſſeminate godlineſs in all places and companies; and let thoſe that frequently converſe with you, eſpecially thoſe of your own families, receive a deeper dye and tincture of heavenlineſs every time they come nigh you, as the cloth doth by every new dipping into the vat.

* Nor did Chriſt ſo ſanctify himſelf for us, that we ſhould continue to be wicked, and ſtrangers to the communion of the Spirit, and his ſanctifying influences. Whoſoever are void of this, in vain promiſe themſelves intercourſe with Chriſt. *Muſc.* on this place.

Digitized by Google

3. God *delights in nothing but holineſs, and holy ones;* he hath ſet all his pleaſure in the ſaints. Be ye holy herein, as God is holy. Indeed, there is this difference betwixt God's choice and yours; he chuſes not men, becauſe they are holy, but that they may be ſo; ſo you are to chuſe them for your delightful companions, that God hath choſen and made holy. "Let all your de- "lights be in the ſaints, even them that excel in virtue," Pſal. xvi. 3.

4. God *abhors and hates all unholineſs;* do ye ſo likewiſe that ye may be like your Father which is in heaven. And when the ſpirit of holineſs runs down this upon you, a ſweeter evidence the world cannot give, that Chriſt was ſanctified for you. Holy ones may confidently lay the hand of their faith on the head of this great ſacrifice, and ſay, "Chriſt our paſſover is ſacrificed for us."

SERMON VIII.

Of the NATURE of CHRIST's MEDIATION.

1 TIM. ii. 5.

And one Mediator betwixt God and Man, the man Chriſt Jeſus.

GREAT and long preparations beſpeak the ſolemnity and greatneſs of the work for which they are deſigned; A man that had but ſeen the heaps of gold, ſilver, and braſs, which David amaſſed in his time, for the building of the temple, might eaſily conclude before one ſtone of it was laid, that it would be a magnificent ſtructure. But lo, here is a deſign of God as far tranſcending that, as the ſubſtance doth the ſhadow. For, indeed, that glorious temple was but the type and figure of Jeſus Chriſt, John ii. 19, 21. and a weak adumbration of that living, ſpiritual temple which he was to build, cementing the lively ſtones thereof together with his own blood, 1 Pet. ii. 5, 6. that the great God might dwell and walk in it, 2 Cor. vi. 16. The preparations for that temple were but of few years, but the conſultations and preparations for this were from eternity, Prov. viii. 31. And as there were preparations for this work (which Chriſt diſpatched in a few years) before the world began; ſo it will be matter of eternal admiration and praiſe, when this world ſhall be diſſolved. What this aſtoniſhing glorious work is, this text will inform you, as to the general nature of it: it is the work of media-

Digitized by Google

tion betwixt God and man, managed by the ſole hand of the man Chriſt Jeſus*.

In this ſcripture (for I ſhall not ſpend time to examine the words in their contexture) you have a deſcription of *Jeſus the Mediator*; and he is here deſcribed four ways, viz. by his work or office, a *Mediator*; by the ſingularity of his mediation, *one Mediator*; and by the nature and quality of his perſon, employed in this ſingular way of mediation, *the man*; and *laſtly*, his name, *Jeſus Chriſt*.

1. He is deſcribed by the work, or office he is employed about Μεσιτης, a Mediator, a middle perſon. So the word imports a fit, indifferent, and equal perſon, that comes between two perſons that are at variance, to compoſe the difference and make peace. Such a middle, equal, indifferent perſon is Chriſt; *a day's-man, to lay his hand upon both*; to arbitrate and award juſtly, and give God his due, and that without ruin to poor man.

2. He is deſcribed by the ſingularity of his mediation, one Mediator, and but one. Though there be many mediators of reconciliation among men, and many interceſſors in a petitionary way, betwixt God and man; yet but εις Μεσιτης, one only mediator of reconciliation betwixt God and man: and it is as needleſs and impious to make more mediators than one, as to make more Gods than one. *There is one God, and one Mediator betwixt God and men.*

He is deſcribed by the nature and quality of his perſon, ανθρωπος, χριστος, &c. *the man Chriſt Jeſus*. This deſcription of him by one nature, and that the human nature alſo (wherein, as you ſhall ſee anon, the Lord eſpecially conſulted our encouragement and comfort); I ſay, his being ſo deſcribed to us, hath, through the corruption of men, been improved to the great diſhonour of Jeſus Chriſt, both by the *Arians* and *Papiſts*.† The former took occaſion from hence to affirm, that he was but ψιλος ανθρωπος, a mere man. The latter allow him to be the true God, but on this weak ground affirm, that he performed not the work of mediation as God, but only as man. Thus what the Spirit ordered for our comfort, is wickedly retorted to Chriſt's diſhonour: for I doubt not but he is deſcribed by his human nature in this place; not only becauſe in this nature he paid that ranſom (which he ſpeaks of in the words immediately following) but eſpecially for the

* God is moſt holy, Man a lump of iniquity. Extremes meet not but by theirs middle; ſinful man can never have communion with, or enjoyment of God, but in, and by a Mediator.

† Wherefore, think ye, has he added the term, *man*: but to expreſs that nature, whereby Chriſt is mediator. *Bellarmine on the Mediation of Chriſt*, book V. chap. 3. vol. 2.

Digitized by Google

drawing of ſinners to him; ſeeing he is the man Chriſt Jeſus, one that clothed himſelf in their own fleſh; and to encourage the faith of believers, that he tenderly regards all their wants and miſeries, and that they may ſafely truſt him with all their concerns, as one that will carefully mind them as his own, and will be for them a merciful and faithful High Prieſt, in things pertaining to God.

4. He is deſcribed by his names; by his *appellative name Chriſt*, and his *proper name Jeſus*. The name *Jeſus*, notes his *work* about which he came; and *Chriſt*, the *offices* to which he was anointed; and in the execution of which he is our *Jeſus**. "In the name "*Jeſus*, the whole goſpel is contained, it is the light, the food, "the medicine of the ſoul," as one ſpeaks. The note from hence is,

Doct. *That Jeſus Chriſt is the true and only Mediator betwixt God and men.*

"Ye are come to Jeſus the Mediator of the new covenant," Heb. xii. 24. "And for this cauſe he is the Mediator of the New "Teſtament," *&c.* Heb. ix. 14. I might ſhew you a whole vein of ſcriptures running this way; but to keep a profitable and clear method, I ſhall ſhew,

Firſt, What is the ſenſe of this word Μεσίτης, a Mediator.†

Secondly, What it implies, as it is applied to Chriſt.

Thirdly, How it appears that he is the true and only Mediator betwixt God and men.

Fourthly, In what capacity he performed his mediatory work.

Firſt, What is the ſenſe and import of this word Μεσίτης, a Mediator? The true ſenſe and importance of it, is a *middle Perſon*, or one that interpoſes betwixt two parties at variance, to make peace betwixt them. So that as Satan is *medium disjungens*, a medium of diſcord; ſo Chriſt is *medium conjungens*, a medium of concord and peace. And he is ſuch a Mediator, both in reſpect of his perſon and office: in reſpect of his perſon, he is a Mediator; *i. e.* one that hath the ſame nature both with God and us, true God, and true man; and in reſpect of his *Office* or work, which is to interpoſe, to tranſact the buſineſs of reconciliation between us

* *In nomine JESU totum latet Evangelium; hoc nomen eſt lux, cibus, et medicina animæ.* Glaſſius.

† We call one, a Mediator, who interpoſes either between parties at variance, or in ſome degree only united, ſo as to reconcile the one, and unite the other more ſtrictly by a new covenant. The name of Mediator, in its proper ſignification, is not the name of a ſubſtance, but the name of an office or employment; wherefore, the ſubſtance and execution of the office do not conſtitute two kinds of mediation, but one and the ſame. *Ameſ. Bellarm. Enerv.* lib. V. p. 117.

Digitized by Google

and God. The former ſome call his *ſubſtantial*, the latter his *energetical*, or operative mediation: Though I rather conceive that which is called his ſubſtantial mediation, is but the aptitude of his perſon to execute the mediatorial function; and that it doth not conſtitute two kinds of mediation. His being a middle perſon, fits and capacitates him to ſtand in the midſt betwixt God and us. This, I ſay, is the proper ſenſe of the word; though Μεσιτης, a Mediator, * is rendered variouſly; ſometimes an umpire or arbitrator; ſometimes a meſſenger that goes betwixt two perſons; ſometimes an interpreter, imparting the mind of one to another; ſometimes a reconciler or peace-maker. And in all theſe ſenſes Chriſt is the Μεσιτης, the middle perſon in his mediation of reconciliation or interceſſion; *i. e.* either in his mediating, by ſuffering to make peace, as he did on earth; or to continue, and maintain peace, as he doth in heaven, by meritorious interceſſion. Both theſe ways he is the only Mediator. And he manageth this his mediation,

1. As an *umpire* or *arbitrator* †; one that layeth his hands upon both parties, as Job ſpeaks, chap. ix. 33. ſo doth Chriſt, he layeth his hands (ſpeaking after the manner of men) upon God, and ſaith, Father, wilt thou be at peace with them, and re-admit them into thy favour? if thou wilt, thou ſhalt be fully ſatisfied for all that they have done againſt thee. And then he layeth his hand upon man, and ſaith, Poor ſinner, be not diſcouraged, thou ſhalt be juſtified and ſaved.

2. As a *meſſenger* or ambaſſador, ſo he came to impart the mind of God to us, and ſo he preſents our deſires to God; and in this ſenſe only *Socinus* would allow Chriſt to be Mediator. But therein he endeavours to undermine the foundation, and to exclude him from being Mediator by a ſuretiſhip; which is,

3. The third way of his mediation. So the apoſtle ſpeaks, Heb. vii. he is εγγυος ‡, the ſurety, or pledge. Which, as the learned David Pareus well expreſſeth it, is one that engageth to ſatisfy another, or gives caution or ſecurity by a pledge in the hand for it. And indeed, both theſe ways, Chriſt is our mediator by ſuretiſhip, *viz.* in a way of ſatisfaction, coming under our obligation to anſwer the law; this he did on the croſs and in a way of caution, a ſurety for the peace, or good behaviour. But to be more explicit and clear, I ſhall,

* Chriſt is called a Mediator, both as he is a middle perſon, and as he is one who mediates; he is middle in perſon; he mediates by office. *Trelcat. Inſtit.* p. 98.

† Μεσιτης. An Umpire, Arbitrator, a midſman, a reconciler.

‡ Εγγυος is a ſurety, one that engages for another, by pledge in hand. From γυιον, which ſignifies hand, and εν in, as if it were, εν γυιω, in hand; or, as *Suidas* would have it, from γην, or γαια the earth which is firm ſtable, immoveable.

Digitized by Google

Secondly, In the next place enquire, what it implies and carries in it, for Christ to be a Mediator betwixt God and us. And there are, mainly, these five things in it.

1. At the first sight, *it carries in it a most dreadful breach and jar betwixt God and men*; else no need of a Mediator of reconciliation. There was indeed a sweet league of amity once between them, but it was quickly dissolved by sin; the wrath of the Lord was kindled against man, pursuing him to destruction, Psal. v. 5. "Thou "hatest all the workers of iniquity." And man was filled with unnatural enmity against his God, Rom. i. 30. θεοστυγεις, *haters of God*; this put an end to all friendly commerce and intercourse between him and God. Reader, say not in thy heart, that it is much, that one sin, and that seemingly so small, should make such a breach as this, and cause the God of mercy and goodness so to abhor the works of his hands, and that as soon as he had made man: for it was a heinous and aggravated evil. It was upright, perfect man, created in the image of God, that thus sinned: he sinned when his mind was most bright, clear and apprehensive; his conscience pure and active; his will free, and able to withstand any temptation; his conscience pure and undefiled; he was a *public* as well as a perfect man, and well knew that the happiness or misery of his numberless offspring was involved in him.

The condition he was placed in, was exceeding happy: no necessity or want could arm and edge temptation: he lived amidst all natural and spiritual pleasures and delights, the Lord most delightfully conversing with him; yea, he sinned while as yet his creation-mercy was fresh upon him; and in this sin was most horrible ingratitude; yea, a casting off the yoke of obedience almost as soon as God had put it on. God now saw the work of his hands spoiled, a race of *rebels* now to be propagated, who, in their successive generations, would be fighting against God: he saw it, and his just indignation sparkled against man, and resolves to pursue him to the bottom of hell.

2. It implies, *a necessity of satisfaction and reparation to the justice of God*: For the very design and end of this mediation was to make peace, by giving full satisfaction to the party that was wronged. The Photinians, and some others, have dreamed of a reconciliation with God, founded, not upon satisfaction, but upon the absolute mercy, goodness, and free will of God. "But concerning "that absolute goodness and mercy of God, reconciling sinners to "himself, there is a deep silence throughout the scriptures *:" and whatever is spoken of it, upon that account, is as it works to

* *De absoluta enim bonitate, et voluntate salvandi, scriptura magis muta est quam piscis.* Dieteric.

Digitized by Google

us through Christ, Eph. i. 3, 4, 5. Acts iv. 12. John vi. 40. And we cannot imagine, either how God could exercise mercy to the prejudice of his justice, which must be, if we must be reconciled without full satisfaction *; or how such a full satisfaction should be made by any other than Christ. Mercy, indeed, moved in the heart of God to poor man; but from his heart it found no way to vent itself for us, but through the heart-blood of Jesus Christ: and in him the justice of God was fully satisfied, and the misery of the creature fully cured. And so, as † Augustine speaks, "God neither lost the severity of his justice in the goodness of "mercy, nor the goodness of his mercy in the exactness of his "severity." But if it had been possible God could have found out a way to reconcile us without satisfaction, yet it is past doubt now, that he hath pitched and fixed on this way. And for any now to imagine to reconcile themselves to God by any thing but faith in the blood of this Mediator, is not only most vain in itself, and destructive to the soul, but most insolently derogatory to the wisdom and grace of God.

And to such I would say, as ‡ Tertullian to Marcion, whom he calls the murderer of truth, "spare the only hope of the whole "world, O thou who destroyest the most necessary glory of our "faith!" All that we hope for is but a phantasm without this. Peace of conscience can be rationally settled on no other foundation but this: for God having made a law to govern man, and this law violated by man; either the penalty must be levied on the delinquent, or satisfaction made by his surety. As good no law, as no penalty for disobedience; and as good no penalty, as no execution. He therefore that will be made a mediator of reconciliation betwixt God and man, must bring God a price in his hand, and that adequate to the offence and wrong done him, else he will not treat about peace; and so did our Mediator.

3. Christ being a Mediator of reconciliation and intercession, implies *the infinite value of his blood and sufferings, as that which in itself was sufficient to stop the course of God's justice, and render him not only placable, but abundantly satisfied and well pleased, even with those that before were enemies.* And so much is said of it, Col. i. 21, 22. "And ye that were sometimes alienated, and enemies in "your minds by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled, in

* From these positions, it follows, that neither the perfect nature nor perfect justice of God can allow any transgression of the law to pass without full satisfaction. *Bradshaw on Justification*, p. 68.

† *Nec in bonitate misericordiæ perdit judicii severitatem; nec in judicando cum severitate amittit misericordiæ bonitatem.* Aug. in Psal. 100.

‡ *Paræ unicæ spei totius orbis, O tu qui destruis necessarium decus fidei.* Tertul. lib. de Carne Christi.

Digitized by Google

" the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy, and " unblameable, and unreproveable in his sight." Surely, that which can cause the holy God, justly incensed against sinners, to lay aside all his wrath, and take an enemy into his bosom, and establish such an amity as can never more be broken, but to rest in his love, and to joy over him with singing, as it is, Zeph. iii. 17. this must be a most excellent and efficacious thing.

4. Christ's being a Mediator of reconciliation, implies *the ardent love and large pity that filled his heart towards poor sinners.* For he doth not only mediate by way of intreaty, going betwixt both, and persuading and begging peace; but he mediates (as you have heard) in the capacity of a surety, by putting himself under an obligation to satisfy our debts. O how compassionately did his heart work towards us, that when he saw the arm of Justice lifted up to destroy us, would interpose himself, and receive the stroke, though he knew it would smite him dead! Our Mediator, like Jonah his type, seeing the stormy sea of God's wrath working tempestuously, and ready to swallow us up, cast in himself to appease the storm. I remember how much that noble act of Marcus Curtius is celebrated in the Roman history, who being informed by the oracle, that the great breach made by the earthquake could not be closed, except something of worth were cast into it, heated with love to the commonwealth, he went and cast in himself. This was looked upon as a bold and brave adventure. But what was this to Christ?

5. Christ being a Mediator betwixt God and man, implies as *the fitness of his person, so his authoritative call to undertake it.* And indeed the Father, who was the wronged person, called him to be the umpire and arbitrator, trusting his honour in his hands. Now Christ was invested with this office and power *virtually*, soon after the breach was made by Adam's fall; for we have the early promise of it, Gen. iii. 15. Ever since, till his incarnation, he was a virtual and effectual Mediator; and, on that account, he is called, " the Lamb slain from the beginning of the world," Rev. xiii. 8. And *actually*, from the time of his incarnation. But having discussed this more largely in a former discourse, I shall dismiss it here, and apply myself to the third thing proposed, which is,

Thirdly, How it appears that Jesus Christ is the true and only Mediator betwixt God and men. I reply, it is manifest he is so,

1. Because he, *and no other, is revealed to us by God.* And if God reveal him, and no other, we must receive him, and no other as such. Take but two scriptures at present, that in 1 Cor. viii. 5. " The heathen have many gods, and many lords," *i. e.* many great gods, supreme powers and ultimate objects of their worship; and lest these great gods should be defiled by their immediate and un-

Digitized by Google

hallowed approaches to them, they therefore invented heroes, demi-gods, intermediate powers *, that they were as agents, or lord-mediators betwixt the gods and them, to convey their prayers to the gods, and the bleſſings of the gods back again to them. "But "unto us (ſaith he) there is but one God, the Father, of whom "are all things, and we by him," *i. e.* one ſupreme eſſence, the firſt ſpring and fountain of bleſſings, and *one Lord*, i. e. one Mediator, "by whom are all things, and we by him." By whom are all things which come from the Father to us, and by whom are all our addreſſes to the Father: So Acts iv. 12. "Neither is there "ſalvation in any other; for there is none other name under "heaven given among men, whereby we muſt be ſaved." No other name †, *i. e.* no other authority, or rather, no other perſon authorized under heaven, *i. e.* the whole world: for heaven is not here oppoſed to earth, as though there were other interceſſors in heaven beſides Chriſt; no, no, in heaven and earth God hath given him, and none but him, to be our Mediator. One ſun is ſufficient for the whole world; and one Mediator for all men in the world. So that the ſcriptures affirm this is he, and exclude all others.

2. Becauſe he, and no other, is fit for, and capable of this office. Who but he that hath the divine and human nature united in his ſingle perſon, can be a fit day's-man to lay his hand upon both? Who but he that was God, could ſupport under ſuch ſufferings as were, by divine juſtice, exacted for ſatisfaction! Take a perſon of the greateſt ſpirit, and put him but an hour in the caſe Chriſt was in, when he ſweat blood in the garden, or uttered that heart-rending cry upon the croſs, and he had melted under it as a moth.

3. Becauſe he is alone ſufficient to reconcile the world to God by his blood, without acceſſions from any other. The virtue of his blood reached back as far as Adam, and reaches forward to the end of the world; and will be as freſh, vigorous, and efficacious then, as the firſt moment it was ſhed. The ſun makes day before it actually riſes,‡ and continues day ſometimes after it is ſet: ſo doth Chriſt, who is the ſame yeſterday, to day, and for

* All the intercourſe and communion between the gods and men is by means of demi-gods. *Plut.*

† Ονομα ετερον, other name, *i. e.* other power, or authority of any whatever. By name, the thing itſelf is underſtood, even Chriſt himſelf; υπο τον ουρανον, *under heaven*, i. e. any where; for *heaven* is not here oppoſed to *earth*, as if there were other ſaviours beſides Chriſt in *heaven*, but not on *earth*: but in the Hebrew the expreſſion is a pleonaſm. *Beza* on this place.

‡ The ſun, before he is ſeen, illuminates the world.

Digitized by Google

ever; so that he is the true and only Mediator betwixt God and men; no other is revealed in scripture; no other is sufficient for it; no other needed beside him.

Fourthly, The last thing to be explained is, in what capacity he executed his mediatory work.

About which we affirm, according to scripture, that he performs that work as God-man, in both natures*. Papists, in denying Christ to act as Mediator, according to his divine nature, do at once spoil the whole mediation of Christ of all its efficacy, dignity and value, which arise from that nature, which they deny to co-operate, and exert its virtue in his active and passive obedience. They say, the apostle, in my text, distinguishes the Mediator from God, in saying, "there is one God and one Mediator." We aptly reply, that the same Apostle distinguishes Christ from man, Gal. i. 1. "Not by man, but by Jesus Christ." Doth it thence follow that Christ is not true man? Or that according to his divine nature only, he called Paul? But what need I stay my reader here? Had not Christ, as Mediator, power to lay down his life, and power to take it up again? John x. 17, 18. Had he not, as Mediator, all power in heaven and earth to institute ordinances, and appoint officers? Mat. xxviii. 18. to baptize men with the Holy Ghost and fire? Mat. iii. 11. to keep those his Father gave him in this world? John xvii. 12. to raise up the saints again in the last day? John vi. 54. Are these, with many more I might name, the effects of the mere human nature? Or, were they not performed by him as God-man? and besides, how could he, as Mediator, be the object of our faith, and religious adoration, if we are not to respect him as God-man? But I long now to be at the application of this: and the first inference from it, is this,

Inference 1. *That it is a dangerous thing to reject Jesus Christ, the only Mediator betwixt God and man.* Alas! there is no other to interpose and screen thee from the devouring fire, the everlasting burnings! *O it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God!* And into his hands you must needs fall, without an interest in the only Mediator. Which of us can dwell with devouring fire? Who can endure the everlasting burnings? Isa. xxxiii. 14. You know how they singed and scorched the green tree, but what would they do to the dry tree? Luke xxiii. 31. Indeed, if there were another plank to save after the shipwreck;

* The divine, without the human nature, or the human nature without the divine, is not mediatorial; but between the divine alone, and the human nature alone, the human divinity, and divine humanity is mediatorial. *Aug. Hom.* 2. The appellations respecting his office, are due to Christ according to both natures. *Amef. Bellarm. Enerv.* chap. 5.

Digitized by Google

any other way to be reconciled to God, besides Jesus the Mediator, somewhat might be said to excuse this folly; but you are shut *up to the faith of Christ*, as to your last remedy, Gal. iii. 23. You are like starving beggars, that are come to the last door. O take heed of despising, or neglecting Christ! if so, there's none to intercede with God for you; the breach betwixt him and you can never be composed. I remember, here, the words of Eli, to his profane sons, who caused men to abhor the offerings of the Lord, 1 Sam. ii. 25. "If one man sin against another, the Judge "shall judge him; but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall "intreat for him?" The meaning is, common trespasses betwixt men, the civil magistrate takes cognizance of it, and decides the controversy by his authority, so that there is an end of that strife; but if man sin against the Lord, who shall intreat or arbitrate in that case? Eli's sons had despised the Lord's sacrifices*; which were sacred types of Christ, and the stated way that men had then to act faith on the Mediator in. Now (saith he) if a man thus sin against the Lord, by despising Christ shadowed out in that way, who shall intreat for him? what hope, what remedy remains?

I remember, it was the saying of Luther, and he spake it with deep resentment, *Nolo Deum absolutum*, "I will have nothing to do with an absolute God." i. e. with God without a Mediator. Thus the Devils have to do with God: but will ye, in whose nature Christ is come, put yourselves into their state and case? God forbid!

Inf. 2. Hence also be informed, *how great an evil it is to join any other Mediators, either of reconciliation, or meritorious intercession, with Jesus Christ.* O this is a horrid sin, and that which both pours the greatest contempt upon Christ, and brings the surest and sorest destruction upon the sinner! I am ashamed my pen should english what mine eyes have seen in the writings of Papists, ascribing as much, yea, more to the mediation of Mary than to Christ, with no less than blasphemous impudence, thus commenting upon scripture: "What is that which the Lord "saith, I have trod the wine-press alone, and of the people "there was no man with me? True Lord, there was no man "with thee, but there was a woman with thee, who received all "these wounds in her heart which thou receivedst in thy body." I will not blot my paper with more of this, but refer the learned reader as under†, where he may (if he have a mind to see more)

* They had trampled on sacrifices, and all the laws of God: and thus, as far as in them lay, had taken away all relief and means of safety. *Grotius on this place.*

† *Martialis Argentinensis*, lib. I. cap. 4. fol. 13. *Vincent. Brun. in meditat. fest.*

Digitized by Google

be informed, not only what blaſphemy hath dropped from ſingle pens, but even from councils, to the reproach of Jeſus Chriſt, and his blood.

How do they ſtamp their own ſordid works with the peculiar dignity and value of Chriſt's blood; and therein ſeek to enter at the gate which God hath ſhut to all the world, becauſe Jeſus Chriſt the Prince entered in thereby, Ezek. xliv. 2, 3. He entered into heaven in a direct immediate way, even in his own name, and for his own ſake; this gate, ſaith the Lord, ſhall be ſhut to all others; and I wiſh men would conſider it, and fear, leſt while they ſeek entrance into heaven at the wrong door, they do not for ever ſhut againſt themſelves the true and only door of happineſs.

Inf. 3. If Jeſus Chriſt be the only Mediator of reconciliation betwixt God and men; *then reconciled ſouls ſhould thankfully aſcribe all the peace, favours, and comforts they have from God, to their Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* Whenever you have had free admiſſion, and ſweet entertainment with God in the more public ordinances, or private duties of his worſhip; when you have had his ſmiles, his ſeals, and with hearts warmed with comfort, are returning from thoſe duties, ſay, O my ſoul, thou mayeſt thank thy good Lord Jeſus Chriſt for all this! had not he interpoſed as a Mediator of reconciliation, I could never have had acceſs to, or friendly communion with God to all eternity.

Immediately upon Adam's ſin the door of communion with God was locked, yea, chained up, and no more coming nigh the Lord: not a ſoul could have any acceſs to him, either in a way of communion in this world, or of enjoyment in that to come. It was Jeſus the Mediator that opened that door again, and in him it is that we have boldneſs, and acceſs with confidence, Eph. iii. 12. "We can now come to God by a new and living way, conſecra-"ted for us through the vail, that is to ſay, his fleſh," Heb. x. 20. The vail had a double uſe, as Chriſt's fleſh anſwerably hath; it hid the glory of the *Sanctum Sanctorum*, and alſo gave entrance into it. Chriſt's incarnation rebates the edge of the divine glory and brightneſs, that we may be able to bear it and converſe with it; and it gives admiſſion into it alſo. O thank your dear Lord Jeſus for your preſent and future heaven! theſe are mercies which daily emerge out of the ocean of Chriſt's blood, and come ſwimming in it to our doors. Bleſſed be God for Jeſus Chriſt!

Inf. 4. If Jeſus Chriſt be the true and only Mediator, both of reconciliation and meritorious interceſſion betwixt God and men,

---

B. Virginis, Colon. 1559. p. 11. *Liber Continuum Dilingæ Anno* 1573. *Concil. Trident. Seſſ.* 25. *Pſalt. Mariæ, Anno* 1573. p. 29.

Digitized by Google

how ſafe and ſecure then is the condition and ſtate of believers? Surely, as his mediation, by ſufferings, hath fully reconciled, ſo his mediation, by interceſſion, will everlaſtingly maintain that ſtate of peace betwixt them and God, and prevent all future breaches. "Being "juſtified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord "Jeſus Chriſt," Rom. v. 1. It is a firm and laſting peace, and the Mediator that made it, is now in heaven to maintain it for ever, and prevent new jars, Heb. ix. 24. "There to appear in the pre-"ſence of God for us;" according to the cuſtom of princes and ſtates, who, being confederated, have their agents reſiding in each others courts, who upon all occaſions appear in the preſence of the prince, in the name and behalf of thoſe whom they repreſent, and negociate for.

And here it is proper to reflect upon the profound and incomprehenſible wiſdom of God, who hath made an advantage to us, even out of our ſin and miſery. Come, ſee and adore the wiſdom of our God, that hath ſo improved, reduced, and diſpoſed the fall of Adam, as to make a ſingular advantage thereby to advance his offspring to a better ſtate! It was truly ſaid by one of the antients upon this account, "That Job was a happier man on the "dunghill, than Adam was in paradiſe*." His holineſs indeed was perfect, his happineſs was great; but neither of them permanent and indefeaſible, as our happineſs by the Mediator is. So that, in the ſame ſenſe ſome divines call Judas's treaſon, *felix ſcelus*, a happy wickedneſs: we may call Adam's fall *felix lapſus*, a happy fall, becauſe ordered and over-ruled by the wiſdom of God, to ſuch an advantage for us. And to that purpoſe Auſtin ſomewhere ſweetly ſpeaks, "† O how happily did I fall in Adam, who "roſe again more happy in Chriſt!" Thus did the Lord turn a poiſon into an antidote, thus did that dreadful fall make way for a more bleſſed and fixed ſtate. Now are we ſo confirmed, fixed, and eſtabliſhed in Chriſt, by the favour of God, that there can be no more ſuch fatal breaches, and dreadful jars betwixt God and his reconciled ones for ever. The bone that is well ſet, is ſtronger where it is knit, than it was before. Bleſſed be God for Jeſus Chriſt!

Inf. 5. Did Jeſus Chriſt interpoſe betwixt us and the wrath of God, as a Mediator of reconciliation? did he rather chuſe to receive the ſtroke upon himſelf, than to ſee us ruined by it? *How well then doth it become the people of God, in a thankful ſenſe of this grace, to interpoſe themſelves betwixt Jeſus Chriſt and the evils they ſee like to fall upon his name and intereſt in the world?* O that there were

* *Felicior Job in ſterquilinio, quam Adamus in Paradiſo.*

† *O quam feliciter cecidi in Adamo, qui poſt lapſum felicius reſurrexi in Chriſto.* Aug.

Digitized by Google

but such a heart in the people of God! I remember it is a saying of Jerom, when he heard the revilings and blasphemings of many against Christ, and his precious truths, "* O (said he) that they "would turn their weapons from Christ to me, and be satisfied "with my blood!" And much to the same sense is that sweet one of Bernard, "† Happy were I, if God would vouchsafe to "use me as a shield." And David could say, "The reproaches "of them that reproached thee, fell on me, Psal. lxix. 9. Ten thousand of our names are nothing to Christ's name: his name is καλον ονομα, a worthy name; and no man that gives up his name as a shield to Christ, but shall thereby secure and increase the true honour of it. And though wicked men, for the present may bespatter them, yet Jesus Christ will take it out of the dirt, (as one speaks), wipe it clean, and give it us again‡. Oh, it is the least one can do, to interpose ourselves and all that is dear to us, betwixt Christ and the wrath of men, when he (as you hear) interposed himself betwixt you and the eternal wrath of God!

SERMON IX.

The first Branch of CHRIST's Prophetical Office, consisting in the Revelation of the Will of GOD.

ACTS iii. 22.

A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, of your Brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things, whatsoever he shall say unto you.

HAVING, in the former discourses, shewn you the solemn preparations, both on the Father's part, and on the Son's, for the blessed design of reconciling us by the meritorious mediation of Christ; and given you a general prospect of that his mediation, in the former sermon; method now requires, that I proceed to shew how he executes this his mediation, in the discharge of his blessed offices of *Prophet*, *Priest*, and *King*.

His *prophetical office* consists of two parts; one *external*, consisting in a true and full revelation of the will of God to men, accord-

* *Utinam in me convertant tela, et meo sanguine satientur.* Jer.

† *Bonum est mihi, si dignetur Deus me uti pro clypeo.* Bern.

‡ Oh, if I could be a bridge over the water for my Lord Jesus to walk upon, and keep his feet dry! Oh, if my poor bit of heaven could go between my Lord and blasphemy and dishonour! *said another worthy.*

Digitized by Google

ing to John xvii. 6. "I have manifeſted thy name to the men "thou gaveſt me." The other in *illuminating the mind*, and opening the heart to receive and embrace that doctrine. The firſt part is contained in the words before us; "A prophet ſhall the Lord "your God raiſe up," &c.

Which words are thoſe of Moſes, recorded in Deut. xviii. 15. and here, by Peter, pertinently applied to Chriſt, to convince the incredulous Jews, that he is the true and only Meſſiah, and the great Prophet of the church: whoſe doctrine it was highly dangerous to contemn, though out of the mouths of ſuch (otherwiſe contemptible) perſons as he and John were. And it is well obſerved by Calvin, he ſingles out this teſtimony of Moſes, rather than any other, becauſe of the great eſteem they had for Moſes, and his writings, beyond any others. Now in the words themſelves are two general parts.

Firſt, Chriſt, according to the prophetical office, deſcribed.

Secondly, Obedience to him, as ſuch a prophet, ſtrictly enjoined.

Firſt. You have here a deſcription of Chriſt in his prophetical office; "A prophet ſhall the Lord your God raiſe up unto you "of your brethren, like unto me." Where Chriſt is deſcribed,

1. By his title, *Prophet*, and that, *princeps prophetarum*, the prince of the prophets, or the great and chief ſhepherd, as he is ſtiled, Heb. xiii. 10. 1 Pet. v. 4. It belongs to a prophet to expound the law, declare the will of God, and foretel things to come: all theſe meet, and that, in a ſingular and eminent manner, in Chriſt our prophet, Matth. v. 21, &c. John i. 18. 1 Pet. i. 11.

4. He is deſcribed by his type; a prophet like unto Moſes, who therein typified and prefigured him. But is it not ſaid of Moſes, in Deut. xxxiv. 10. "that there aroſe not a prophet ſince "in Iſrael, like unto Moſes, whom the Lord knew face to face?" True, of mere men there never aroſe ſo great a prophet in Iſrael, as Moſes was; either in reſpect of his familiarity with God, or of his miracles which he wrought in the power of God*: but Moſes himſelf was but a ſtar to this ſun. However, in theſe following particulars, Chriſt was like him. He was a prophet that went between God and the people, carried God's mind to them, and returned theirs to God, they not being able to hear the voice of God immediately†, Deut. xviii. 16, 17. "According to all that "thou deſireſt of the Lord thy God in Horeb, in the day of the "aſſembly, ſaying, Let me not again hear the voice of the Lord "my God, neither let me ſee this great fire any more, that I die

* *Not like*, in the following particulars, namely, his familiarity with God, and miracles. *Eſt. on this place.*

† They who dreaded that majeſty of God, ſpeaking from heaven, could not be afraid to hear it, when in fleſh, and made like themſelves.

Digitized by Google

"not." And upon this their requeſt, God makes the promiſe which is cited in the text; verſe 17, 18. "They have well ſpoken that which they have ſpoken: I will raiſe them up a prophet like "unto thee," &c. Moſes was a very faithful prophet, preciſely faithful, and exact in all things that God gave him in charge, even to a pin of the tabernacle. "Moſes verily was faithful in all his "houſe, as a ſervant, for a teſtimony of thoſe things which were "to be ſpoken after: but Chriſt as a Son over his own houſe," Heb. iii. 5, 6. Again, Moſes confirmed his doctrine by miracles, which he wrought in the preſence, and to the conviction of gainſayers. Herein, Chriſt our Prophet is alſo like unto Moſes, who wrought many, mighty, and uncontrolled miracles, which could not be denied, and by them confirmed the goſpel which he preached. Laſtly Moſes was that prophet which brought God's Iſrael out of literal Egypt, and Chriſt his out of ſpiritual Egypt, whereof that bondage was a figure. Thus he is deſcribed by his likeneſs to Moſes, his type.

3. He is deſcribed by his ſtock and original, from which, according to his fleſh, he ſprang; "I will raiſe him up from among "thy brethren. Of Iſrael, as concerning the fleſh, Chriſt came," Rom. ix. 5. And "it is evident that our Lord ſprang out of Ju"dah," Heb. vii. 14. He honoured that nation by his nativity. Thus the prophet is deſcribed.

Secondly, Here is a ſtrict injunction of obedience to this Prophet, *Him ſhall ye hear in all things, &c.* By *hearing*, underſtand obedience. So words of ſenſe are frequently put in ſcripture, to ſignify thoſe affections that are moved by, and uſe to follow thoſe ſenſes. And this obedience is required to be yielded to this prophet *only, and univerſally*, and under great penalties*. 'Tis required to be given to him only, for ſo [*him*] in the text muſt be underſtood, as excluſive of all others. 'Tis true, we are commanded to obey the voice of his miniſters, Heb. xiii. 17. But ſtill 'tis Chriſt ſpeaking them, by whom we pay our obedience: *He that heareth you, heareth me:* We obey them in the Lord, i. e. commanding or forbidding in Chriſt's name and authority. So when God ſaid, Deut. vi. 13. ["Thou ſhalt ſerve him,"] Chriſt expounds it excluſively, Matth. iv. 10. "Him only ſhalt thou ſerve." He is *the only Lord*, Jude 4. and therefore to him only our obedience is required. And as 'tis due to him only, ſo to him univerſally; "Him ſhall ye hear in all things:" his commands are to be obeyed, not diſputed. A judgment of *diſcretion* indeed is allowed to Chriſtians, to judge whether it be the will of Chriſt or

* Him ſhall ye hear, i. e. Him *only*; ſo thou ſhalt ſerve him, Deut. vi. 13. is explained, *Him only*, Matth. iv. 10.

Digitized by Google

no. We must "prove what is that holy, good, and acceptable "will," Rom. xii. 2. "His sheep hear his voice, and a stranger "they will not follow: they know his voice, but know not the "voice of strangers, John x. 4, 5." But when his will is understood and known, we have no liberty of choice, but are concluded by it, be the duty commanded never so difficult, or the sin forbidden never so tempting: and this is also required severely, under penalty of being destroyed from among the people, and of God's requiring it at our hands, as it is in Deut. xviii. *i. e.* of revenging himself in the destruction of the disobedient. Hence the observation.

Doct. *That Jesus Christ is called and appointed by God to be the great Prophet and Teacher of the Church.*

He is *anointed to preach* good tidings to the meek, and sent to bind up the broken hearted, Isa. lxi. 1. When he came to preach the gospel among the people, then was this scripture fulfilled, Mat. xi. 27. "Yea, all things are delivered him of his Father; so "as no man knoweth who the Father is, but the Son, and he to "whom the Son will reveal him." All light is now collected into one body of light, the Sun of righteousness; and he "enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world," John i. 9. And though he dispensed knowledge variously, in times past, speaking in many ways and divers manners, to the fathers; yet now the method and way of revealing the will of God to us is fixed and settled in Christ: *In these last times he hath spoken to us by his Son.*

Twice hath the Lord solemnly sealed him to this office, or approved and owned him in it, by a miraculous voice from the most excellent glory, Matth. iii. 17. and Matth. xvii. 5.

In this point there are two things doctrinally to be discussed and opened, viz. What Christ's being a Prophet to the church implies: and how he executes and discharges this his office.

First, What is implied in Christ's being a Prophet to the church. And it necessarily imports these three things.

1. The natural ignorance and blindness of men in the things of God. This shews us that "vain man is born as the wild ass's colt." —The world is involved in darkness: The people sit as in the region and shadow of death, till Christ arise upon their souls, Matt. iv. 15, 16, 17. It is true, in the state of innocency man had a clear apprehension of the will of God, without a Mediator: but now that light is quenched in the corruption of nature, "and the natural man receiveth not the things of God," 1 Cor. ii. 14*.

* Heavenly things exceed the capacity of reason, for they are above what is called right reason; they contradict the wisdom of the flesh, for they are contrary to

Digitized by Google

Theſe things of God are not only contrary to corrupt and carnal reaſon, but they are alſo above right reaſon. Grace indeed uſeth nature, but nature can do nothing without grace. The mind of a natural man hath not only a native blindneſs, by reaſon whereof it cannot diſcern the things of the Spirit, but alſo a natural enmity, Rom. viii. 7. and hates the light, 1 John iii. 19, 20. So that until the mind be healed, and enlightened by Jeſus Chriſt, the natural faculty can no more diſcern the things of the Spirit, than the ſenſitive faculty can diſcern the things of reaſon. The myſteries of nature may be diſcovered by the light of nature; but when it comes to ſupernatural myſteries, there, *omnis Platonicorum caligavit ſubtilitas*, as Cyprian ſomewhere ſpeaks, the moſt ſubtle, ſearching, penetrating wit and reaſon, is at a loſs.

2. It implies the divinity of Chriſt, and proves him to be true God; foraſmuch as no other can reveal to the world, in all ages, the ſecrets that lay hid in the heart of God, and that with ſuch convincing evidence and authority. * He brought his doctrine from the boſom of his Father; John i. 18. "The only begotten "Son, who is in the boſom of the Father, he hath revealed him." The ſame words which his Father gave him he hath given us, John xvii. 8. He ſpake to us that which he had ſeen with his Father, John viii. 38. What man can tell the boſom-counſels and ſecrets of God? Who but he that eternally lay in that boſom can expound them?

Beſides, other prophets had their times aſſigned them to riſe, ſhine, and ſet again by death, Zech. i. 5. "Your fathers, where "are they? And do the prophets live for ever?" But Chriſt is a fixed and perpetual ſun, that gives light in all ages of the world: for he is "the ſame yeſterday, to day, and for ever," Heb. xiii. 8. Yea, and the very beams of his divinity ſhone with awfulneſs upon the hearts of them that heard him; ſo that his very enemies were forced to acknowledge, that "never any man ſpake like "him," John vii. 46.

---

depraved reaſon: Nature ſtands in need of grace, for the right diſpoſing of the mind to receive a ſupernatural object; and grace uſes nature, that, by ſtrength of mind, clearneſs of judgment, and the light of good education, greater progreſs may be made in the ſtudy of the ſacred writings. *Reynold. Animalis homo.*

† If the doctrine of Chriſt, and his diſcourſes be examined, it will be as clear as ſunſhine, that his words are not the words of a man, or ſome prophet, but of the Father himſelf, that is, of the true God. For Chriſt not only brought his goſpel and doctrine from the boſom of the Father, but likewiſe he taught, not as the Phariſees and other mere men, but ως εξουσιαν εχων, as one having divine authority, Luke iv. 23. which his enemies, the officers ſent by the Phariſees, confeſſed in theſe words, "Never man ſpake like this man;" therefore as his words are the words of the Father, and were not ſpoken with human, but divine authority, ſo it is certain, that he muſt be the true God, ſince a divine effect argues a divine cauſe; and ſince there is but one only true God, Chriſt muſt be one, and co-eſſential with the Father. *Dieterici Analyſis Evang. par.* 3. p. 341.

Digitized by Google

3. It implies Christ to be the original and fountain of all that light which is ministerially diffused up and down the world by men. Ministers are but stars, which shine with a borrowed light from the sun: so speaks the apostle, 2 Cor. iii. 6, 7. "For God, "who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined "into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory "of God, in the face of Jesus Christ." Those that teach men, must be first taught by Christ. All the prophets of the Old, and all the prophets, pastors, and teachers of the New-Testament, have lighted their candles at his torch: it was Christ that "gave "them a mouth and wisdom," Luke xxi. 15. What Paul received from the Lord, he delivered to the church, 1 Cor. xi. 23. Jesus Christ is the chief Shepherd, 1 Pet. v. 4. and all the undershepherds receive their gifts and commissions from him. These things are manifestly implied in Christ's prophetical office.

Secondly, We shall next enquire how he executes and discharges this his office, or how he enlightens and teacheth men the will of God. And this he hath done variously, gradually, plainly, powerfully, sweetly, purely, and fully.

1. Our great Prophet hath revealed unto men the will of God variously; not holding one even and constant tenor in the manifestations of the Father's will, but as the apostle speaks, πολυμερως και πολυτροπως, *at sundry times and in divers manners*, Heb. i. 1. Sometimes he taught the church *immediately*, and in his own person, John xviii. 20. He declared God's righteousness in the great congregation, Psal. xxii. 22. And sometimes *mediately*, by his ministers and officers, deputed to that service by him: So he dispensed the knowledge of God to the church before his incarnation; it was Christ that in the time, and by the ministry of Noah, went and preached to the spirits in prison, as it is 1 Pet. iii. 19; that is, to men and women then alive, but now separated from the body, and imprisoned in hell for their disobedience. And it was Christ that was with the church in the wilderness, instructing and guiding them by the ministry of Moses and Aaron, Acts vii. 37, 58; and so he hath taught the church since his ascension. He cannot now be personally with us, having other business to do for us in heaven; but, however, he will not be wanting to teach us by his officers, whom, for that end, he hath set and appointed in the church, Eph. iv. 11, 12.

2. He hath dispensed his blessed light to the church gradually. The discoveries of light have been πολυμερως, that is, in many parts or parcels; sometimes more obscure and cloudy; as to the Old-Testament believers, by visions, dreams, Urim, Thummim, vocal oracles, types, sacrifices, &c. which, though comparatively, were but a weak glimmering light, and had no glory compared to that which now shines, 2 Cor. iii. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. yet it was sufficient

Digitized by Google

for the inſtruction and ſalvation of the elect in thoſe times; but now is light ſprung up glorioufly in the goſpel-diſpenſation; "And "we all with open face, behold as in a glaſs, the glory of the "Lord." It is to us not a twilight, but the light of a perfect day; and ſtill is advancing in the ſeveral ages of the world. I know more (ſaith Luther) than bleſſed Auſtin knew; and they that come after me, will know more than I know.

3. Jeſus Chriſt, our great Prophet hath manifeſted to us the will of God plainly and perſpicuouſly. When he was on earth himſelf, he taught the people by parables, and "without a parable "he ſpake nothing," Matt. xiii. 3, 4. He clothed ſublime and ſpiritual myſteries in earthly metaphors, bringing them thereby to the low and dull capacities of men, ſpeaking ſo familiarly to the people about them, as if he had been ſpeaking earthly things to them, John iii. 12. And ſo (according to his own example) would he have his miniſters preach, "uſing great plainneſs of "ſpeech," 2 Cor. iii. 12. and by manifeſtation of the truth, "commending themſelves to every man's conſcience," 1 Cor. iv. 2. * Yet not allowing them to be rude and careleſs in expreſſion, pouring out indigeſted, crude, immethodical words; no, a holy, ſerious, ſtrict, and grave expreſſion befits the lips of his ambaſſadors: and who ever ſpake more weightily, more logically, perſuaſively than that apoſtle, by whoſe pen Chriſt hath admoniſhed us to beware of vain affections and ſwelling words of vanity? But he would have us ſtoop to the underſtandings of the meaneſt, and not give the people a comment darker than the text: he would have us rather pierce their ears, than tickle their fancies; and break their hearts, than pleaſe their ears. Chriſt was a very plain preacher.

4. Jeſus Chriſt diſcovered truth powerfully; ſpeaking "as one "having authority, and not as the Phariſees," Matt. vii. 29. They were cold and dull preachers, their words did even freeze betwixt their lips; but Chriſt ſpake with power; there was heat as well as light in his doctrine: and ſo there is ſtill, though it be in the mouth of poor contemptible men, 2 Cor. x. 4. "The wea-"pons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God, "to the caſting down of ſtrong holds: 'tis ſtill quick and powerful, "ſharper than a two edged-ſword; and piercing, to the dividing "aſunder of ſoul and ſpirit, and of joints and marrow," Heb. iv. 12. The bleſſed apoſtle imitated Chriſt; and being filled with his

* But the apoſtle does not deſign by this apology, that teachers ſhould take the liberty to throw out every low, ſordid expreſſion, or whatever comes into their heads, without ſenſe, method, ſolidity and judgment; for who a greater awakener of men's conſciences than he? or who a ſtronger convincer of their judgments by the weight of his arguments? who, with a ſweet, but heavenly power, captivates the affections. *Reynold.*

Digitized by Google

Spirit, ſpake home and freely to the hearts of men. So many words, ſo many claps of thunder, (as one * ſaid of him) which made the hearts of ſinners ſhake and tremble in their breaſts. All faithful and able miniſters are not alike gifted in this particular; but, ſurely, there is a holy ſeriouſneſs and ſpiritual grace and majeſty in their doctrine, commanding reverence from their hearers.

5. This Prophet, Jeſus Chriſt, taught the people the mind of God in a ſweet, affectionate, and taking manner: his words made their hearts burn within them, Luke xxiv. 32. It was prophefied of him, Iſa. xlii. 2. "He ſhall not cry, nor lift up, nor cauſe his "voice to be heard on high. A bruiſed reed he ſhall not break, "and ſmoaking flax he ſhall not quench. He knew how to ſpeak a "word in ſeaſon to the weary ſoul," Iſa. lxi. 1. "He gathered the "Lambs with his arms, and gently led thoſe that were with young," Iſa. iv. 11. How ſweetly did his words ſlide to the melting hearts about him! he drew with cords of love, with the bands of a man: he diſcouraged none, upbraided none that were willing to come to him: his familiarity and free condeſcenſions to the moſt vile and deſpicable ſinners, were often made the matter of his reproach. Such is his gentle and ſweet carriage to his people, that the church is called the *Lamb's wife*, Rev. xix. 7.

6. He revealed the mind of God purely to men; his doctrine had not the leaſt daſh of error to debaſe it; his moſt enviouſly obſervant hearers could find nothing to charge him with: he is "the faithful and true witneſs," Rev. i. 5. and he hath commanded his miniſters to preſerve the ſimplicity and purity of the goſpel, and not to blend and ſophiſticate it, 2 Cor. iv. 2.

7. And laſtly, He revealed the will of God perfectly and fully, keeping back nothing needful to ſalvation. So he tells his diſciples, John xv. 15. "All things that I have heard of my Father, I have "made known unto you." He was "faithful as a Son over his "own houſe," Heb. iii. 6. Thus you have a brief account of what is implied in this part of Chriſt's prophetical office, and how he performed it.

Inference 1. If Jeſus Chriſt, who is now paſſed into the heavens, be the great Prophet and Teacher of the church; hence we may juſtly infer *the continual neceſſity of a ſtanding miniſtry of the church:* for by his miniſters he now teacheth us, and to that intent hath fixed them in the church, by a firm conſtitution, there to remain to the end of the world, Matt. xxviii. 20. He teacheth men no more perſonally, but miniſterially. His miniſters ſupply the want

* Auguſtine wiſhed to have heard Paul from the pulpit, whom he called Chriſt's trumpet, and God's cloud; ſo many words, ſo many claps of thunder ſeemed to ſound in his ears.

Digitized by Google

of his perſonal preſence, 2 Cor. v. 10. "We pray you in Chriſt's "ſtead." Theſe officers he gave the church at his aſcenſion, *i. e.* when he ceaſed to teach them any longer with his own lips; and ſo ſet them in the church, that their ſucceſſion ſhall never totally fail; for ſo the word ἔθετο, *he hath ſet*, 1 Cor. xii. 28. plainly implies. They are ſet by a ſure eſtabliſhment, a firm and unalterable conſtitution, even as the *times and ſeaſons, which the Father hath put* [ἔθετο] *in his own power:* it is the ſame word; and it is well they are ſo firmly ſet and fixed there; for how many adverſaries in all ages have endeavoured to ſhake the very office itſelf? pretending that it is needleſs to be taught by men, and wreſting ſuch ſcriptures as theſe to countenance their error, Joel ii. 28, 29. "I will pour out my Spirit upon all fleſh; and your ſons and "daughters ſhall propheſy," &c. And Jer. xxxi. 34. "Theſe "ſhall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man "his brother, ſaying, Know the Lord; for they ſhall all know "me from the leaſt of them to the greateſt of them." As to that of Joel, it is anſwered, That if an Old-Teſtament prophecy may be underſtood according to a New-Teſtament interpretation, then that prophecy doth no way oppoſe, but confirm the goſpel miniſtry. How the apoſtle underſtood the prophet in that his prophecy, may be ſeen in Acts ii. 17. when the Spirit was poured out on the day of Pentecoſt upon the apoſtles. And ſure he muſt be a confident perſon indeed, that thinks not an *apoſtle* to be as good an expoſitor of the *prophet*, as himſelf. And for that in Jer. xxxi. we ſay,

1. That if it conclude againſt miniſterial teachings, it muſt equally conclude againſt Chriſtian conferences.

2. We ſay that cannot be the ſenſe of one ſcripture which contradicts the plain ſenſe of other ſcriptures; but ſo this would, Eph. iv. 11, 12. 1 Cor. xii. 28.

3. And we ſay, the ſenſe of that text is not *negative*, but *comparative*. Not that they ſhall have no need to be taught any truth, but no ſuch need to be taught the firſt truths; That there is a God, and who is this true God: "They ſhall no more teach every "man his brother, ſaying, Know the Lord! for they ſhall all "know me." To conclude, God hath given miniſters to the church for the work of converſion and edification, "till we all "come into the unity of the faith, to a perfect man," Eph. iv. 11, 12. So that when all the elect are converted, and all thoſe converts become perfect men; when there is no error in judgment or practice, and no ſeducer to cauſe it, then, and not till then, will a goſpel miniſtry be uſeleſs. But (as it is well obſerved) there is not a man that oppoſes a goſpel miniſtry, but the very being of that man is a ſufficient argument for the continuance of it.

Digitized by Google

Inf. 2. If Christ be the great Prophet of the church, and such a Prophet; then it follows, *That the weakest Christians need not be discouraged at the dulness and incapacity they find in themselves:* for Christ is not only a patient and condescending teacher, but he can also, as he hath often done, reveal that to babes, which is hid from the wise and learned, Matt. xi. 25. "The testimonies of the "Lord are sure, making wise the simple," Psal. xix. 7. Yea, and such as you are, the Lord delights to chuse, that his grace may be the more conspicuous in your weakness, 1 Cor. i. 26, 27. You will have nothing of your own to glory in; you will not say, as a proud wretch once said, *Ego et Deus meus;* "I and my God did "this." Jesus Christ affects not social glory, he will not divide the praise with any. Well then, be not discouraged; others may know more, in other things than you, but you are not incapable of knowing so much as shall save your souls, if Christ will be your teacher. In other knowledge they excel you; but if ye know Jesus Christ, and the truth as it is in him, one drop of your knowledge is worth a whole sea of their gifts: one truth sucked by *faith* and *prayer* from the breast of Christ, is better than ten thousand dry notions beaten out by racking the understanding. It is better in kind, the one being but natural, the other supernatural, from the saving illuminations and inward teachings of the Spirit; and so is one of those better things *that accompany salvation.* It is better in respect of effects; other knowledge leaves the heart as dry, barren, and unaffected, as if it had its seat in another man's head; but that little you have been taught of Christ, sheds down its gracious influences upon your affections, and slides sweetly to your melting hearts. So that as one "preferred the "most despicable work of a plain rustic Christian, * before all the "triumphs of Alexander and Cæsar;" much more ought you to prefer one saving manifestation of the Spirit, to all the powerless illuminations of natural men.

Inf. 3. If Christ be the great Prophet and teacher of the church; it follows, *That prayer is a proper mean for the increase of knowledge:* Prayer is the golden key that unlocks that treasure. When Daniel was to expound that secret which was contained in the king's dream, about which the Chaldean magicians had racked their brains to no purpose; what course doth Daniel take? Why, "he went to his house, (saith the text, Dan. ii. 17, 18.) and "made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah his "companions; that they would desire mercies of the God of hea-"ven concerning his secret." And then was the secret revealed

* *Si mihi daretur optio, eligerem Christiani rustici sordidissimum et maxime agreste opus, pre omnibus victoriis et triumphis* Alexandri *et* Cæsaris.

Digitized by Google

to Daniel. Luther was wont to say*, "Three things made a divine; meditation, temptation, and prayer." Holy Mr Bradford was wont to study upon his knees. Those truths that are got by prayer, leave an unusual sweetness upon the heart. If Christ be our teacher, it becomes all his saints to be at his feet.

Inf. 4. If Christ be the great Prophet and teacher of the church, *We may thence discern and judge of doctrines, and it may serve us as a test to try them by.* For such as Christ is, such are the doctrines that flow from him: every error pretends to derive itself from him; but as Christ was holy, humble, heavenly, meek, peaceful, plain and simple, and in all things alien, yea, contrary to the wisdom of the world, the gratifications of the flesh; such are the truths which he teacheth. They have his character and image engraven on them. Would you know then whether this or that doctrine be from the Spirit of Christ or no? Examine the doctrine itself by this rule. And whatsoever doctrine you find to encourage and countenance sin, to exalt self, to be accommodated to earthly designs and interests, to wrap and bend to the humours and lusts of men; in a word, what doctrine soever directly, and as a proper cause makes them that profess it carnal, turbulent, proud, sensual, &c. you may safely reject it, and conclude this never came from Jesus Christ. The doctrine of Christ is after godliness; his truth sanctifies. There is a *Gustus spiritualis judicii*, a spiritual taste, by which those that have their senses exercised can distinguish things that differ. "The spiritual man judgeth all "things," 1 Cor. ii. 15. "His ear tries words, as his mouth "tasteth meats," Job xxxiv. 3. Swallow nothing (let it come never so speciously) that hath not some relish of Christ and holiness in it. Be sure, Christ never revealed any thing to men, that derogates from his own glory, or prejudices and obstructs the ends of his own death.

Inf. 5. And as it will serve us for a test of doctrines, *so it serves for a test of ministers*; and hence you may judge who are authorized and sent by Christ the great Prophet, to declare his will to men. Surely those whom he sends have his *Spirit* in their *hearts*, as well as his words in their *mouths*. And according to the measures of grace received, they faithfully endeavour to fulfil their ministry for Christ, as Christ did for his Father: "As my Father "hath sent me (saith Christ) so send I you," John xx. 21. They take Christ for their pattern in the whole course of their ministration, and are such as sincerely endeavour to imitate the great Shepherd, in these six particulars following:

1. Jesus Christ was a *faithful Minister*, the "faithful and true

* *Tria faciunt theologum, meditatio, tentatio et precatio.* Luther.

Digitized by Google

" witneſs," Rev. i. 5. He declared the whole mind of God to men. Of him it was prophetically ſaid, Pſal. xl. 10. " I have not " hid thy righteouſneſs within my heart; I have declared thy faith- " fulneſs, and thy ſalvation; I have not concealed thy loving " kindneſs and thy truth from the great congregation." To the ſame ſenſe, and almoſt in the ſame words, the apoſtle Paul profeſſed, in Acts xx. 20. " I have kept back nothing that was pro- " fitable unto you; and ver. 35. " I have ſhewed you all things." Not that every faithful miniſter doth in the courſe of his miniſtry, anatomize the whole body of truth, and fully expound and apply each particular to the people: No, that is not the meaning, but of thoſe doctrines which they have opportunity of opening, they do not out of fear, or to accommodate and ſecure baſe low ends, withhold the mind of God, or ſo corrupt and abuſe his words, as to ſubject truth to their own, or other men's luſts: " They preach " not as pleaſing men, but God," 1 Theſſ. ii. 4. " For if we yet " pleaſe men, we cannot be the ſervants of Chriſt," Gal. i. 10. Truth muſt be ſpoken, though the greateſt on earth be offended.

2. Jeſus Chriſt was a *tender-hearted Miniſter*, full of compaſſion to ſouls. He was ſent to *bind up the broken in heart*, Iſa. lxi. 1. He was full of bowels to poor ſinners. " He grieved at the hardneſs " of men's hearts, Mark iii. 5. He mourned over Jeruſalem, and ſaid, " O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem! how oft would I have gathered " thy children, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings!" Matth. xxiii. 27. His bowels yerned when he ſaw the multitude, as ſheep having no ſhepherd, Matth. ix. 37. Theſe bowels of Chriſt muſt be in all the under ſhepherds. " God is my witneſs, " (ſaith one of them) how greatly I long after you all*, in [or " after the pattern of] the bowels of Chriſt Jeſus," Phil. i. 8. He that ſhews a hard heart, unaffected with the dangers and miſeries of ſouls, can never ſhew a commiſſion from Chriſt to authorize him for miniſterial work.

3. Jeſus Chriſt *was a laborious painful Miniſter*, he put a neceſſity on himſelf to finiſh his work in his day; a work infinitely great, in a very little time; John ix. 4. " I muſt work the works of him " that ſent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man " can work." O how much work did Chriſt do in a little time on earth! " He went about doing good," Acts x. 38. He was never idle. When he ſits down at Jacob's well, to reſt himſelf, being weary, preſently he falls into his work, preaching the goſpel, to the *Samaritaneſs*. In this muſt his miniſters reſemble him; " ſtriving according to his working, that worketh in them mightily,"

* *In* here is put for *inſtar*, as, like unto, after the manner or pattern of, &c.

Digitized by Google

Col. i. 28, 29. An idle minister seems to be a contradiction *in adjecto*; as who should say, a dark light.

4. *Jesus Christ delighted in nothing more than the success of his ministry*; to see the work of the Lord prosper in his hand, this was meat and drink to him. When the seventy returned, and reported the success of their first embassy, "Lord, even the devils "are subject to us through thy name!" "Why, (saith Christ) "I beheld Satan fall as lightning from heaven." As if he had said, You tell me no news, I saw it when I sent you out at first: I knew the gospel would make work where it came. "And in "that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit," Luke x. 17, 18, 21. And is it not so with those sent by him? do not they value the success of their ministry at a high rate? It is not (saith one) the expence, but the recoiling of our labours back again upon us, that kills us. Ministers would not die so fast, nor be grey-headed so soon, could they but see the travail of their souls. "My little children, (saith "Paul) of whom I travail again in birth, πάλιν ὠδίνω, till Christ be "formed in you," Gal. iv. 19. As for those that have the name of shepherds only, who visit the flock only once a year, about shearing time; who have "the instruments of a foolish shepherd," *(forcipes et mulctra)* the shears and pail, Zech. xi. 15. woeful will be their condition at the appearing of this great Shepherd.

5. *Jesus Christ was a minister that lived up to his doctrine*: his life and doctrine harmonized in all things. He pressed to holiness in his doctrine, and was the great pattern of holiness in his life, Matt. xi. 28. "Learn of me, I am meek and lowly." And such his ministers desire to approve themselves, Phil. iv. 9. "What "ye have heard, and seen in me, that do." He preached to their eyes, as well as ears. His life was a comment on his doctrine. They might see holiness acted in his life, as well as sounded by his lips. He preached the doctrine, and lived the application.

6. And lastly, *Jesus Christ was a minister that minded and maintained sweet, secret communion with God, for all his constant public labours.* If he had been preaching and healing all the day, yet he would redeem time from his very sleep to spend in secret prayer; Matt. xiv. 23. "When he had sent the multitude away, "he went up into a mountain apart to pray, and was there alone." O blessed pattern! Let the keepers of the vineyards remember they have a vineyard of their own to keep, a soul of their own that must be looked after as well as other men's. Those that, in these things, imitate Christ, are surely sent to us from him, and are worthy of double honour: They are a choice blessing to the people.

Digitized by Google

SERMON X.

The second Branch of Christ's Prophetical Office, consisting in the Illumination of the Understanding.

LUKE xxiv. 45.

Then opened he their understandings, &c.

KNOWLEDGE of spiritual things is well distinguished into intellectual and practical: the first hath its seat in the mind, the latter in the heart. This latter, divines call a knowledge peculiar to saints; and, in the apostle's dialect, it is υπερεχον της γνωσεως Χριστου Ιησου, Phil. iii. 8. "The eminency, or excellency of the knowledge of Christ."

And indeed, there is but little excellency in all those petty notions which furnish the lips with discourse, unless by a sweet and powerful influence they draw the conscience and will to the obedience of Christ. Light in the mind is necessarily antecedent to the sweet and heavenly motions and elevations of the affections: For the farther any man stands from the light of truth, the farther he must needs be from the heat of comfort. Heavenly quickenings are begotten in the heart, while the sun of righteousness spreads the beams of truth into the understanding, and the soul sits under those its wings; yet all the light of the gospel spreading and diffusing itself into the mind, can never savingly open and change the heart, without another act of Christ upon it; and what that is, the text informs you; *Then opened he their understandings, that they might understand the scriptures.*

In which words we have both an act of Christ upon the disciples understandings, and the immediate end and scope of that act.

1. Christ's act upon their understandings: *He opened their understandings.* By understanding is not here meant the mind only, in opposition to the heart, will, and affections, but these were opened by and with the mind. The mind is to the heart, as the door to the house: what comes in to the heart, comes in at the understanding, which is introductive to it; and altho' truths sometimes go no farther than the entry, never penetrate the hearts, yet, here, this effect is undoubtedly included.

Expositors make this expression parallel to that in Acts xvi. 14. "The Lord opened the heart of Lydia." And it is well observed, that it is one thing to open the scriptures, that is, to expound them, and give the meaning of them, as Paul is said to do in Acts xviii. 3. and another thing to open the mind or heart, as it is here.

Digitized by Google

There are, as a learned man truly obſerves, two doors of the ſoul barred againſt Chriſt; the underſtanding by ignorance; and the heart by hardneſs: both theſe are opened by Chriſt*. The former is opened by the preaching of the goſpel, the other by the internal operation of the Spirit. The former belongs to the firſt part of Chriſt's prophetical office, opened in the foregoing ſermon: the latter, to that ſpecial internal part of his prophetical office, to be opened in this.

And that it was not a naked act upon their minds only, but that their hearts and minds did work in fellowſhip, being both touched by this act of Chriſt, is evident enough by the effects mentioned, ver. 52, 53. "They returned to Jeruſalem with great joy, "and were continually in the temple, praiſing and bleſſing God." It is confeſſed, that before this time Chriſt had opened their hearts by converſion; and this opening is not to be underſtood ſimply, but *ſecundum quid*, in reference to thoſe particular truths, in which, till now, they were not ſufficiently informed, and ſo their hearts could not be duly affected with them. They were very dark in their apprehenſions of the death and reſurrection of Chriſt; and conſequently their hearts were ſad and dejected about that which had befallen him, ver. 17. But when he opened the ſcriptures and their underſtandings and hearts together, then things appeared with another face, and they returned, bleſſing and praiſing God.

2. Here is farther to be conſidered, the deſign and end of this act upon their underſtandings: *That they might underſtand the ſcriptures:* † Where let it be marked, reader, that the teachings of Chriſt, and his Spirit, were never deſigned to take men off from reading, and ſtudying, and ſearching the ſcriptures, as ſome vain notioniſts, have pretended, oppoſing thoſe things which are ſubordinated, but to make their ſtudies and duties the more fruitful, beneficial, and effectual to their ſouls; or that they might this way receive the end or bleſſing of all their duties. God never intended to aboliſh his Word, by giving his Spirit; and they are true fanatics (as Calvin upon this place calls them) that think, or pretend ſo. By this means he would at once impart more light, and make that they had before more operative and uſeful to them, eſpecially in ſuch a time of need as this was. Hence we obſerve,

* It is he who opens our hearts by his law. *Capel. ſpecil.* p. 57.

† God does not give the Spirit to his people, on purpoſe to aboliſh his Word, but rather to render the word effectual and profitable to them; and therefore the fanatics falſely, under pretext of revelation, take a liberty to ſlight the ſcriptures. *Calvin on this place.*

Digitized by Google

Doct. *That the opening of the mind and heart, effectually to receive the truths of God, is the peculiar prerogative and office of Jesus Christ.*

One of the great miseries under which lapsed nature labours, is spiritual blindness*. Jesus Christ brings that eye-salve which only can cure it. Rev. iii. 18. "I counsel thee to buy of me eye-"salve, that thou mayest see." Those to whom the Spirit hath applied it, can say, as it is 1 John v. 20. "We know that the Son "of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we "may know him that is true; and we are in him that is true, "even in his Son Jesus Christ: this is the true God, and eter-"nal life.

† "To the spiritual illumination of a soul, it suffices not that "the object be revealed, nor yet that man, the subject of that "knowledge, have a due use of his own reason; but it is further "necessary that the grace and special assistance of the holy Spirit "be superadded, to open and molify the heart, and so give it a "due taste and relish of the sweetness of spiritual truth." By opening the gospel, he reveals truth to us, and, by opening the heart, in us. Now, though this cannot be without that, yet it is much more excellent to have truth revealed in us, than to us: "this divines call *præcipuum illud* ἀποτέλεσμα *muneris prophetici*; "the principal perfective effect of the prophetical office," the special blessing promised in the new covenant, Heb. viii. 10. "I will "put my laws in their mind, and write them in their hearts."

For explication of this part of Christ's prophetical office, I shall, as in the former, shew what is included in the opening of their understanding, and by what acts Christ performs it. And,

First, Give you a brief account of what is included in this act of Christ; take it in the following particulars.

1. It implies the transcendant nature of spiritual things, far exceeding the highest flight and reach of natural reason. Jesus Christ must by his Spirit open the understandings of men, or they can never comprehend such mysteries. Some men have strong natural parts, and by improvement of them are become eagle-ey'd in the mysteries of nature. Who more acute than the heathen

* The eyes of the blind must be anointed with eye-salve, by which man, being cured of his blindness, is restored to spiritual sight. *Glas. Phil.* 2 *part. p.* 340.

† *Ad perfectam et propriam rerum supernaturalium cognitionem, non sufficere ex parte objecti revelationem, nec ex parte subjecti debitum usum rationis, sed insuper requiri gratiam Christi, et speciale adjutorium Spiritus Sancti quo cor aperiatur, emolliatur, et supernaturalis veritatis dulcedinis recte babeat proportionatum* ξεν *et gustum spiritualis judicii.* Reynold. Animal. Homo. p. 23.

Digitized by Google

ſages? Yet, to them the goſpel ſeemed fooliſhneſs, 1 Cor. i. 20. Auſtin confeſſes, that before his converſion, he often felt his ſpirit ſwell with offence and contempt of the goſpel; and he deſpiſing it, ſaid *dedignabar eſſe parvulus*; "he ſcorned to become a "child again." Bradwardine, that profound doctor, learned *uſque ad ſtuporem*, even to a wonder, profeſſes that when he read Paul's epiſtles, he contemned them, becauſe in them he found not a metaphyſical wit. Surely, it is poſſible a man may, with *Berengarius*, be able to diſpute *de omni ſcibili*, of every point of knowledge; to unravel nature from the cedar in *Lebanon*, to the hyſop on the wall; and yet be as blind as a bat in the knowledge of Chriſt. * Yes, it is poſſible a man's underſtanding may be improved by the goſpel, to a great ability in the literal knowledge of it, ſo as to be able to expound the ſcriptures orthodoxly, and enlighten others by them, as it is Mat. vii. 22. The Scribes and Phariſees were well acquainted with the ſcriptures of the Old Teſtament; yea, ſuch were their abilities, and eſteem among the people for them, that the apoſtle ſtiles them the *princes of this world*, 1 Cor. ii. 8. And yet notwithſtanding Chriſt truly calls them *blind guides*, Mat. xxiii. Till Chriſt open the heart, we can know nothing of him, or of his will, as we ought to know it. So experimentally true is that of the apoſtle, 1 Cor. ii. 14, 15. "The natu-"ral man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they "are fooliſhneſs to him; neither can he know them, becauſe "they are ſpiritually diſcerned. But he that is ſpiritual, judgeth "all things; yet he himſelf is judged of no man." The ſpiritual man can judge and diſcern the carnal man, but the carnal man wants a faculty to judge of the ſpiritual man: as a man that carries a dark lanthorn, can ſee another by its light, but the other cannot diſcern him. Such is the difference betwixt perſons whoſe hearts Chriſt hath, or hath not opened.

2. Chriſt's opening the underſtanding, implies the inſufficiency of all external means, how excellent ſoever they are in themſelves, to operate ſavingly upon men, till Chriſt by his power opens the ſoul, and ſo makes them effectual. † What excellent preachers

* The moſt refined and ingenious ſort of unregenerate men have nothing in them which is more excellent than common grace; and common grace leaves them in the ſtate of nature, under the power of ſin, and in the very ſuburbs of hell, wholly at the command of Satan. And if any man think otherwiſe, let him take heed that every thought doth not nail him faſt to that unregenerate and curſed ſtate for evermore. *Dr Clynelles Divin. Trin. p.* 410, &c.

† We maintain a twofold manner of prophetic teaching, the one immediate, the other mediate; by the former, with ſome help of the latter, men's minds may be enlightened, and their hearts inclined to the obedience of faith: by the latter neither of theſe effects can be produced without the help of the former. *Synopſis purior. Theol. diſp.* XXVI. 318.

Digitized by Google

were Isaiah and Jeremiah to the Jews? The former spake of Christ more like an Evangelist of the New than a Prophet of the Old Testament; the latter was a most convictive and pathetical preacher: yet the one complains, Isa. liii. 1. "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed;" The other laments the successlessness of his ministry, Jer. vi. 18. "The bellows are burnt, the lead is consumed of the fire, the "founder melteth in vain." Under the New Testament, what people ever enjoyed such choice helps and means, as those that lived under the ministry of Christ and the apostles? Yet how many remained still in darkness? Mat. xi. 27. "We have piped to you, "but ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, but ye "have not lamented." Neither the delightful airs of mercy, nor the doleful ditties of judgment, could affect or move their hearts.

And indeed if you search into the reason of it, you will be satisfied, that the choicest of means can do nothing upon the heart, until Christ by his Spirit open it, because ordinances work not as natural causes do: for then the effect would always follow unless miraculously hindered; and it would be equally wonderful, that all that hear should not be converted, as that the three children should be in the fiery furnace so long, and yet not be burned: no, it works not as a natural, but as a moral cause, whose efficacy depends on the gracious and arbitrary concurrence of the Spirit. "The wind bloweth where it listeth," John iii. 8. The ordinances are like the pool of Bethesda, John v. 4. At a certain time an angel came down and troubled the waters, and then they had a healing virtue in them. So the Spirit comes down at certain times in the word, and opens the heart; and then it becomes the power of God to salvation. So that when you see souls daily sitting under excellent and choice means, and remain dead still, you may say as Martha did to Christ of her brother Lazarus, Lord, if thou hadst been here they had not remained dead. If thou hadst been in this sermon, it had not been so ineffectual to them.

3. It implies the utter impotency of man to open his own heart, and thereby make the word effectual to his own conversion and salvation. He that at first said, "let there be light," and it was so, must shine into our hearts, or they will never be savingly enlightened. * 2 Cor. iv. 4, 6. A double misery lies upon a great part of mankind, *viz. Impotency* and *Pride*. They have not only lost the liberty and freedom of their wills, but with it have so far lost their understanding and humility as not to own it. But, alas!

* It must therefore be acknowledged, that such is our insufficiency of ourselves in all respects, that the heavenly doctrine cannot be profitable to us, or have its due effect, except so far as the Spirit both forms our minds to understand it, and our hearts to submit to it. *Calvin* on this place.

Digitized by Google

Man is become a moſt impotent creature by the fall; ſo far from being able to open his own heart, that he cannot know the things of the Spirit, 1 Cor. ii. 14. cannot believe, John vi. 44. cannot obey, Rom. viii. 7. cannot ſpeak one good word, Mat. xii. 34. cannot think one good thought, 2 Cor. iii. 5. cannot do one good act, John xv. 5. O what a helpleſs, ſhiftleſs thing is a poor ſinner! Suitably to this ſtate of impotence, converſion is in ſcripture called regeneration, John iii. 3. a reſurrection from the dead, Eph. ii. 5. a creation, Eph. ii. 10. a victory, 2 Cor. x. 5. Which doth not only imply man to be purely paſſive in his converſion to God, but a renitency, and oppoſition made to that power which goes forth from God to recover him.

Laſtly, Chriſt's opening the underſtanding imports his divine power, whereby he is able to ſubdue all things to himſelf. Who but God knows the heart? * Who but God can unlock and open it at pleaſure? No mere creature, no not the angels themſelves, who for their large underſtandings are called intelligencies, can command or open the heart. We may ſtand and knock at men's hearts, till our own ake; but no opening till Chriſt come. He can fit a key to all the croſs wards of the will, and with ſweet efficacy open it, and that without any force or violence to it. Theſe things are carried in this part of his office, conſiſting in opening the heart: which was the firſt thing propounded for explication.

Secondly, In the next place, let us ſee by what acts Jeſus Chriſt performs this work of his, and what way and method he takes to open the hearts of ſinners.

And there are two principal ways, by which Chriſt opens the underſtandings and hearts of men, *viz.* By his Word and Spirit.

1. By his word; to this end was Paul commiſſioned and ſent to preach the goſpel, Acts xxvi. 18. "To open their eyes, and turn "them from darkneſs to light, and from the power of Satan to "God." The Lord can, if he pleaſes, accompliſh this immediately; but though he can do it, he will not do it ordinarily without means, becauſe he will honour his own inſtitutions. Therefore you may obſerve, that when Lydia's heart was to be opened, "there appeared unto Paul a man of Macedonia, who prayed him, "ſaying, come over into Macedonia, and help us," Acts xix. 9. God will keep up his ordinances among men: and though he hath not tied himſelf, yet he hath tied us, to them. Cornelius muſt ſend for Peter: God can make the earth produce corn, as it did at firſt, without cultivation and labour; but he that ſhall now expect it in the neglect of means, may periſh for want of bread.

* He alone, whoſe throne is in heaven, has acceſs into, and can inſtruct the heart.

Digitized by Google

2. But the ordinances in themſelves cannot do it, as I noted before; and therefore Jeſus Chriſt hath ſent forth the Spirit, who is his *Prorex*, his vicegerent, to carry on this work upon the hearts of his elect. And when the Spirit comes down upon the ſouls in the adminiſtration of the ordinances, he effectually opens the heart to receive the Lord Jeſus, by the hearing of faith. He breaks in upon the underſtanding and conſcience by powerful convictions and compunctions; ſo much that word, John xvi. 8. imports, "He "ſhall convince the world of ſin;" convince by clear demonſtration*, ſuch as inforces aſſent, ſo that the ſoul cannot but yield it to be ſo; and yet the door of the heart is not opened, till he has alſo put forth his power upon the will, and, by a ſweet and ſecret efficacy, overcome all its reluctations, and the ſoul be made willing in the day of his power. When this is done, the heart is opened: ſaving light now ſhines in it; and this light ſet up, the Spirit in the ſoul is,

1. A *new light* in which all things appear far otherwiſe than they did before. The names *Chriſt* and *ſin*, the words *heaven* and *hell* have another ſound in that man's ears, than formerly they had. When he comes to read the ſame ſcriptures, which poſſibly he had read a hundred times before, he wonders he ſhould be ſo blind as he was, to overlook ſuch great, weighty, and concerning things as he now beholds in them; and ſaith, Where were mine eyes, that I could never ſee theſe things before?

2. It is a very *affecting light*; a light that hath heat and powerful influences with it, which makes deep impreſſions on the heart. Hence they whoſe eyes the great Prophet opens, are ſaid to be "brought out of darkneſs into his marvellous light," 1 Pet. ii. 9. The ſoul is greatly affected with what it ſees. The beams of light are contracted and twiſted together in the mind; and being reflected on the heart and affections, ſoon cauſe them to ſmoke and burn. "Did not our hearts burn within us, whilſt he talked with "us, and opened to us the ſcriptures?"

3. And it is a *growing light*, like the light of the morning, which "ſhines more and more unto the perfect day, Prov. iv. 18. When the Spirit firſt opens the underſtanding, he doth not give it at once a full ſight of all truths, or a full ſenſe of the power, ſweetneſs and goodneſs of any truth; but the ſoul in the uſe of means grows up to a greater clearneſs day by day: its knowledge grows *extenſively* in meaſure, and *intenſively* in power and efficacy.

* Το μη δυνατον αλλως ειχειν αλλ' ουτω λεγομεν. Demonſtration is an argument ſhewing the impoſſibility of a thing's being otherwiſe than as we affirm.—*Ariſt.*

Digitized by Google

And thus the Lord Jesus by his Spirit opens the understanding. Now the use of this follows in five practical deductions.

Inference 1. If this be the work and office of Jesus Christ, to open the understandings of men; hence we infer *the miseries that lie upon those men, whose understandings, to this day, Jesus Christ hath not opened;* of whom we may say, as it is, Deut. xxix. 4. "To this day Christ hath not given them eyes to see." Natural blindness, whereby we are deprived of the light of this world, is sad; but spiritual blindness is much more so. See how dolefully their case is represented, 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. "But if our gospel be "hid, it is hid to them that are lost; whose eyes the God of "this world hath blinded, lest the light of the glorious gospel of "Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them:" he means a total and final concealment of the saving power of the word from them. Why, what if Jesus Christ withhold it, and will not be a prophet to them, what is their condition? Truly no better than lost men. It is hid τοις απολλυμενοις, to them that are to perish, or be destroyed. This blindness, like the covering of the face, or tying the handkerchief over the eyes, is in order to their turning off into hell. More particularly, because the point is of deep concernment, let us consider,

1. The *judgment inflicted*, and that is spiritual blindness. A sore misery indeed! Not an universal ignorance of all truths, O no! in natural and moral truths they are oftentimes acute, and sharp-sighted men; but in that part of knowledge which wraps up eternal life, John xvii. 2. there they are utterly blinded: as it is said of the Jews, upon whom this misery lies, that *blindness in part is happened to Israel.* They are learned and knowing persons in other matters, but they know not Jesus Christ; there is the grand and sad defect.

2. *The subject* of this judgment, the mind, which is the eye of the soul. If it were put upon the body, it would not be so considerable; this falls immediately upon the soul, the noblest part of man, and upon the mind, the highest and noblest faculty of the soul, whereby we understand, think, and reason. This in scripture is called πνευμα the spirit, the intellectual, rational faculty, which the philosophers call το ηγεμονικον, the leading, directive faculty; which is to the soul what the natural eye is to the body. Now the soul being the most active and restless thing in the world, always working, and its leading, directive power blind, judge what a sad and dangerous state such a soul is in; just like a fiery, high-mettled horse, whose eyes are out, furiously carrying his rider upon rocks, pits and dangerous precipices. I remember Chrysostom, speaking of the loss of a soul, saith, that the loss of a member of the body is nothing to it; for, saith he, if a man lose an eye, ear,

Digitized by Google

hand or foot, there is another to ſupply its want: *Omnia Deus dedit duplicia*, "God hath given us thoſe members double;" *animam vero unam*, "but he hath not given us two ſouls," that if one be loſt, yet the other may be ſaved. Surely it were better for thee, reader, to have every member of thy body made the ſeat and ſubject of the moſt exquiſite racking torments, than for ſpiritual blindneſs to befal thy ſoul. Moreover,

3. Conſider *the indiſcernableneſs of this judgment* to the ſoul on whom it lies: they know it not, no more than a man knows that he is aſleep. Indeed it is "the ſpirit of a deep ſleep poured out upon "them from the Lord," Iſa. xxix. 10. like that which befel Adam when God opened his ſide, and took out a rib. This renders their miſery the more remedileſs: "Becauſe ye ſay you ſee, "therefore your ſin remaineth," John ix. 41. Once more,

4. Conſider *the tendency and effects of it.* What doth this tend to but eternal ruin? for hereby we are cut off from the only remedy. The ſoul that's ſo blinded, can never ſee ſin, nor a Saviour; but, like the *Egyptians*, during the palpable darkneſs, ſits ſtill, and moves not after its own recovery. And as ruin is that to which it tends, ſo in order thereto, it renders all the ordinances and duties under which that ſoul comes, altogether uſeleſs and ineffectual to its ſalvation. He comes to the word, and ſees others melted by it, but to him it ſignifies nothing. O what a heavy ſtroke of God is this! Moſt wretched is their caſe, to whom Jeſus Chriſt will not apply this eye-ſalve, that they may ſee. Did you but underſtand the miſery of ſuch a ſtate, if Chriſt ſhould ſay to you, as he did to the blind man, Mat. xx. 33. "What wilt thou that I ſhould "do for thee?" You would return as he did, "Lord, that my "eyes may be opened."

Infer. 2. If Jeſus Chriſt be the great Prophet of the church, *then ſurely he will take ſpecial care both of the church and the under ſhepherds appointed by him to feed them:* elſe both the *objects* and *inſtruments* upon and by which he executes his office, muſt fail, and conſequently this glorious office be in vain. Hence he is ſaid "to walk among the golden candleſticks," Rev. i. 13. and Rev. ii. 1. "to hold the ſtars in his right hand." Jeſus Chriſt inſtrumentally opens the underſtandings of men by preaching of the goſpel; and whilſt there is an elect ſoul to be converted, or a convert to be farther illuminated, means ſhall not fail to accompliſh it by.

Infer. 3. Hence you that are yet in darkneſs, may be directed to whom to apply yourſelves for ſaving knowledge. 'Tis Chriſt that hath the ſovereign eye-ſalve, that can cure your blindneſs*;

* So thick is that cataract which is grown over the eye of our underſtanding, that none but God can remove it. Chriſt was ſent to be a light to the Gentiles,

Digitized by Google

he only hath the key of the houſe of David; he opens, and no man ſhutteth. O that I might perſuade you to ſet yourſelves in his way, under the ordinances, and cry to him, "Lord, that my "eyes may be opened." Three things are marvelouſly encouraging "to you ſo to do.

1. God the Father hath put him into this office, for the cure of ſuch as you be, Iſa. xlix. 6. "I will give thee for a light to the "Gentiles, that thou mayeſt be my ſalvation to the end of the "earth." This may furniſh you with an argument to plead for a cure. Why do you not go to God, and ſay, Lord, didſt thou give Jeſus Chriſt a commiſſion to open the blind eyes? Behold me, Lord, ſuch a one am I, a poor, dark, ignorant ſoul. Didſt thou give him to be thy ſalvation to the ends of the earth? No place nor people excluded from the benefit of that right; and ſhall I ſtill remain in the ſhadow of death? O that unto me he might be a ſaving light alſo? The beſt and moſt excellent work that ever thou wroughteſt, brings thee no glory till it comes into the light! O let me ſee and admire it!

2. It is encouraging to think, that *Jeſus Chriſt hath actually opened the eyes of them that were as dark and ignorant as you are.* He hath revealed thoſe things to babes, that have been hid from the wiſe and prudent, Mat. xi. 25. "The law of the Lord is perfect, "making wiſe the ſimple," Pſal. xix. 7. And if you look among thoſe whom Chriſt hath enlightened, you will not find "many "wiſe after the fleſh, many mighty, or noble; but the fooliſh, "weak, baſe, and deſpiſed; theſe are they on whom he hath "glorified the riches of his grace," 1 Cor. i. 26, 27.

3. And is it not yet further encouraging to you, that *hitherto he hath mercifully continued you under the means of light?* Why is not the light of the goſpel put out? Why are times and ſeaſons of grace continued to you, if God have no further deſign of good to your ſouls? Be not therefore diſcouraged, but wait on the Lord in the uſe of means, that you may yet be healed.

Queſt. If you aſk, What can we do to put ourſelves into the way of the Spirit, in order to ſuch a cure?

Sol. I ſay, though you cannot do any thing that can make the goſpel effectual, yet the Spirit of God can make thoſe means you are capable of uſing effectual, if he pleaſe to concur with them. And it is a certain truth, that your inability to do what is above your power, doth no ways excuſe you from doing what is within the compaſs of your power to do. I know no act that is ſaving, can be done without the concurrence of ſpiritual grace; yea, and no act that hath a remote order and tendency thereto, without a

ſo he enlightens the medium; and to open the eyes of the blind, ſo he heals the organ; he is the only oculiſt: *Firmin's Real Chriſtian, p.* 30.

Digitized by Google

more general concourſe of God's aſſiſtance; but herein he is not behind-hand with you. Let me therefore adviſe,

1. That you *diligently attend upon an able, faithful, and ſearching miniſtry.* Neglect no opportunity God affords you; for how know you but that may be the time of mercy to your ſoul? If he that lay ſo many years at the pool of *Bethesda*, had been wanting but that hour when the angel came down and troubled the waters, he had not been healed.

2. Satisfy not yourſelves with hearing, but *conſider what you hear.* Allow time to reflect upon what God hath ſpoken to you. What power is there in man more excellent, or more appropriate to the reaſonable nature, than its reflective and ſelf-conſidering power? There is little hope of any good to be done upon your ſouls, till you begin to go alone, and become thinking men and women: Here all converſion begins. I know, a ſeverer taſk can hardly be impoſed upon a carnal heart. It is a hard thing to bring a man and himſelf together upon this account: but this muſt be, if ever the Lord do your ſouls good. Pſal. iv. 4. "Commune with your own hearts."

3. *Labour to ſee, and ingenuouſly confeſs the inſufficiency of all your other knowledge to do you good.* What if you had never ſo much ſkill and knowledge in other myſteries? What if you be never ſo well acquainted with the letter of the ſcripture? What if you had an angelical illumination? This can never ſave thy ſoul. No, all thy knowledge ſignifies nothing till the Lord ſhew thee by ſpecial light the deplorable ſight of thy own heart, and a ſaving ſight of Jeſus Chriſt, thy only remedy.

Inf. 4. Since then there is a common light, and ſpecial ſaving light, which none but Chriſt can give, *it is therefore the concernment of every one of you to try what your light is.* "We know, (ſaith "the apoſtle, 1 Cor. viii. 1.) that we all have knowledge." O but what, and whence is it? Is it the light of life ſpringing from Jeſus Chriſt, that bright and morning ſtar, or only ſuch as the Devils and damned have? Theſe lights differ,

1. In their very *kind* and *natures.* The one is heavenly, ſupernatural, and ſpiritual; the other earthly, and natural, the effect of a better conſtitution or education, James iii. 15, 17.

2. They differ moſt apparently in their *effects* and *operations.* The light that comes in a ſpecial way from Chriſt, is humbling, abaſing, and ſoul-emptying light: by it a man ſees the vileneſs of his own nature and practice, which begets ſelf-loathing in him; but natural light, on the contrary, puffs up, exalts, and makes the heart ſwell with ſelf-conceitedneſs, 1 Cor. viii. 1.

The light of Chriſt is *practical* and *operative*, ſtill urging the ſoul, yet lovingly conſtraining it to obedience. No ſooner did it ſhine

Digitized by Google

into Paul's heart, but presently he asks, "Lord, what wilt thou "have me to do?" Acts ix. 6. It brought forth fruit in the Colossians, from the first day it came to them, Col. i. 6; but the other spends itself in impractical notions, and is detained in unrighteousness, Rom. i. 18. The light of Christ is powerfully *transformative* of its subjects, changing the man, in whom it is, into the same image, from glory to glory, 2 Cor. iii. 18. But common light leaves the heart as dead, as carnal and sensual, as if no light at all were in it.

In a word, All saving light *endears* Jesus Christ to the soul; and as it could not value him before it saw him, so when once he appears to the soul in his own light, he is appreciated and endeared unspeakably: then none but Christ; all is but dung, that he may win Christ: none in heaven but him, nor in earth desirable in comparison of him. But no such effect flows from natural common knowledge.

3. They differ in their *issues*. Natural common knowledge vanisheth, as the apostle speaks, 1 Cor. xiii. 8. It is but a *May*-flower, and dies in its month. "Doth not their excellency that "is in them go away?" Job iv. 21. But this that springs from Christ is perfected, not destroyed by death: it springs up into everlasting life. The soul in which it is subjected, carries it away with it into glory. John xvii. 2. this light is life eternal. Now turn in, and compare yourselves with these rules: let not false light deceive you.

Inf. 5. Lastly, *How are they obliged to love, serve, and honour Jesus Christ, whom he hath enlightened with the saving knowledge of himself?* O that with hands and hearts lifted up to heaven, ye would adore the free grace of Jesus Christ to your souls? How many round about you have their eyes closed, and their hearts shut up! How many are in darkness, and there are like to remain, till they come to the blackness of darkness, which is reserved for them? O what a pleasant thing is it for your eyes to see the light of this world! But what is it for the eye of your mind to see God in Christ? To see such ravishing sights as the objects of faith are? and to have such a pledge as this given you of the blessed visions of glory? for *in this light you shall see light*. Bless God, and boast not: rejoice in your light, but be not proud of it; and beware ye sin not against the best and highest light in this world. If God were so incensed against the Heathens for disobeying the light of nature, what is it in you to sin with eyes clearly illuminated with the purest light that shines in this world? You know, God charges it upon Solomon, 1 Kings xi. 9. that he turned from the way of obedience, *after the Lord had appeared to him twice*. Jesus Christ

Digitized by Google

intended when he opened your eyes, that your eyes ſhould direct your feet. Light is a ſpecial help to obedience, and obedience is a ſingular help to encreaſe your light.

SERMON XI.

The Nature and Neceſſity of the Prieſthood of CHRIST.

HEB. ix. 23.

It was therefore neceſſary that the patterns of things in the Heavens ſhould be purified with theſe; but the heavenly things themſelves with better ſacrifices than theſe.

SALVATION (as to the actual diſpenſation of it) is *revealed* by Chriſt as a *Prophet*, *procured* by him as a *Prieſt*, *applied* by him as a *King*. In vain is it revealed, if not purchaſed; in vain revealed and purchaſed, if not applied. How it is revealed, both to us, and in us, by our great Prophet, hath been declared. And now, from the prophetical office, we paſs on to the prieſtly office of Jeſus Chriſt, who as our Prieſt, purchaſed our ſalvation. In this office is contained the grand relief for a ſoul diſtreſſed by the guilt of ſin. When all other reliefs have been eſſayed, it is the blood of this great ſacrifice, ſprinkled by faith upon the trembling conſcience, that muſt cool, refreſh, and ſweetly compoſe and ſettle it. Now, ſeeing ſo great a weight hangs upon this office, the apoſtle induſtriouſly confirms and commends it in this epiſtle, and more eſpecially in this ninth chapter; ſhewing how it was figured to the world by the typical blood of the ſacrifices, but infinitely excels them all: and as in many other moſt weighty reſpects, ſo principally in this, that the blood of theſe ſacrifices did but purify the types or patterns of the heavenly things; but the blood of this ſacrifice purified or conſecrated the heavenly things themſelves, ſignified by thoſe types.

The words read, contains an argument to prove the neceſſity of the offering up of Chriſt, the great Sacrifice, drawn from the proportion betwixt the types, and the things typified*. If the ſanc-

* He concludes the foregoing argument on the neceſſity of redemption, from the proportion between the types and the heavenly things: for, if the things typically ſacred, behoved to be purified with typical blood; ſurely, the heavenly things behoved to be purified by blood ſo much more excelling that other, as theſe things themſelves excel their earthly types. The reaſon is plain: becauſe, what proportion there is between the types and the things typified, muſt likewiſe take place as to the blood that conſecrates them. *Pareus* on this place.

Digitized by Google

tuary, mercy-seat, and all things pertaining to the service of the tabernacle, were to be consecrated by blood; those earthly, but sacred types, by the blood of bulls and lambs, &c. much more the heavenly things shadowed by them, ought to be purified or consecrated by better blood than the blood of beasts. The blood consecrating these, should as much excel the blood that consecrated those, as the heavenly things themselves do, in their own nature, excel those earthly shadows of them. Look, what proportion there is between the type and anti-type, the like proportion also is betwixt the blood that consecrates them; earthly things with common, heavenly things with the most excellent blood.

So then, there are two things to be especially observed here: *First*, The nature of Christ's death and sufferings: it had the nature, use and end of a sacrifice; and of all sacrifices the most excellent. *Secondly*, The necessity of his offering it up: it was necessary to correspond with all the types and prefigurations of it under the law; but especially it was necessary for the expiating of sin, the propitiating of a justly incensed God, and the opening a way for reconciled ones to come to God in. The point I shall give you from it is,

Doct. *That the sacrifice of Christ, our High-priest, is most excellent in itself, and most necessary for us.*

Sacrifices * are of two sorts; *eucharistical*, or thank-offerings, in testification of homage, duty and service; and in token of gratitude for mercies freely received; and *ilastical*, or expiatory, for satisfaction to justice, and thereby the atoning and reconciling of God. Of this last kind was the sacrifice offered by Jesus Christ for us: to this office he was called by God, Heb. v. 5. In it he was confirmed by the unchangeable oath of God, Psal. cx. 4. for it, he was singularly qualified by his incarnation, Heb. x. 6, 7. and all the ends of it he has fully answered, Heb. ix. 11, 12.

My present design is, from this scripture, to open the general nature and absolute necessity of the priesthood of Christ; shewing what his priesthood implies in it, and how all this was indispensably necessary in order to our recovery from the deplorable state of sin and misery.

First then, we will consider what it supposes and implies; and then, wherein it consists. And there are six things which it either pre-supposeth, or necessarily includeth in it.

* Of sacrifices, some are typical, others are the very things signified by the type: and both are of two sorts, ἱλαστικα, *expiatory*, or εὐχαριστικα, i. e. thanksgiving. *Lucas Trelcat*, p. 78.

Digitized by Google

1. At first sight, *it supposes man's revolt and fall from God*; and a dreadful breach made thereby betwixt God and him, else no need of an atoning sacrifice. "If one died for all, then were all dead," 2 Cor. v. 14. dead in law, under sentence to die, and that eternally. In all the sacrifices, from Adam to Christ, this was still preached to the world, that there was a fearful breach betwixt God and man; and even so, that justice required our blood should be shed. And the fire flaming on the altar, which wholly burnt up the sacrifice, was a lively emblem of that fiery indignation that should devour the adversaries. But above all, when Christ, that true and great Sacrifice, was offered up to God, then was the fairest glass that ever was in the world, set before us, therein to see our sin and misery by the fall.

The nature of Christ's priesthood opened.

2. *His priesthood supposes the unalterable purpose of God to take vengeance for sin**; he will not let it pass. I will not determine what God could do in this case, by his absolute power; but I think it is generally yielded, that, by his ordinate power, he could do no less than punish it in the person of the sinner, or of his surety.

Those that contend for such a forgiveness, as is an act of charity, like that whereby private persons forgive one another, must at once suppose God to part with his right, *cedendo de jure suo*†, and also render the satisfaction of Christ altogether useless, as to the procurement of forgiveness; yea, rather an obstacle, than a means to it. Surely, the nature and truth of God oblige him to punish sin‡. "He is of purer eyes than to look upon iniquity," Heb. i. 13. And beside, the word is gone out of his mouth, that the sinner shall die.

3. *The priesthood of Christ pre-supposeth the utter impotency of men to appease God, and recover his favour by any thing he could do or suffer.* Surely God would not come down to assume a body to die, and be offered up for us, if at any cheaper rate it could have been accomplished; there was no other way to recover man and satisfy God. Those that deny the satisfaction of Christ, and talk of his dying to confirm the truth, and give us an example of meekness, patience, and self-denial, affirming these to be the sole ends of his death, do not only therein root up the foundations of their own comfort, peace and pardon, but most boldly impeach and tax the

* The reader may find this case learnedly and solidly handled by Dr *Twisse, Vindic. gratiæ*, digres. 8.

† By betraying the cause of justice, in departing from his own eternal and necessary rights.

‡ In no other way can God's hatred of sin be made to appear, than by inflicting the deserved punishment. *Brad. on Justific.* p. 61.

Digitized by Google

infinite wisdom. God could have done all this at a cheaper rate; the sufferings of a mere creature are able to attain these ends: the deaths of the martyrs did it. But who by dying can satisfy and reconcile God? what creature can bring him an adequate and proportionable value for sin? yea, for all the sin that ever was, or shall be transmitted to the natures, or committed by the persons of all God's elect, from Adam, to the last that shall be found alive at the Lord's coming? surely, none but Christ can do this.

4. *Christ's priesthood implies the necessity of his being God-man**. It was necessary he should be a man, in order to his passion, compassion, and derivation of his righteousness and holiness to men. Had he not been a man, he had had no sacrifice to offer, no soul or body to suffer in. The Godhead is impatible, immortal, and above all those sufferings and miseries Christ felt for us. Besides, his being man, fills him with bowels of compassion and tender sense of our miseries: this makes him a merciful and faithful High-priest, Heb. iv. 15. and not only fits him to pity, but to sanctify us also; for "he that sanctifieth, and they that are sanc-"tified, are both of one," Heb. ii. 11, 14, 17. And as necessary it was our High-priest should be God, since the value and efficacy of his sacrifice results from thence.

5. *The priesthood of Christ implies the extremity of his sufferings.* In sacrifices, you know, there was a destruction, a kind of annihilation of the creature to the glory of God. The shedding of the creature's blood, and burning its flesh with fire, was but an umbrage, or faint resemblance of what Christ endured, when he made his soul an offering for sin.

And lastly, *It implies the gracious design of God to reconcile us at a dear rate to himself, in that he called and confirmed Christ in his priesthood by an oath, and thereby laid out a sacrifice, of infinite value for the world.* Sins, for which no sacrifice is allowed, are desperate sins; and the case of such sinners is helpless: But if God allow, yea, and provide a sacrifice himself, how plainly doth it speak his intentions of peace and mercy? These things are manifestly presupposed, or implied in Christ's priesthood.

"† This priesthood of Christ is that function, wherein he "comes before God, in our name and place, to fulfil the law,

---

* Hence, therefore, it appears, how necessary it was that Christ the Mediator should be both God and Man: had he not been Man, he would not have been a fit sacrifice: and had he not been God, that sacrifice would not have been of sufficient efficacy. *Amef. Med.* p. 92.

† *Sacerdotium Christi est functio qua coram Deo apparet, ut legem ab ipso acceptam nostro nomine observet, seipsum victimam reconciliationis pro nostris peccatis ipsi offerat, suaque apud Deum intercessione opem ipsius perennem, ac donationem Spiritus Sancti nobis impetret, atque efficaciter applicet.* Synopsis purioris Theol. p. 328.

Digitized by Google

" and offer up himself to him a sacrifice of reconciliation for our " sins; and by his intercession to continue and apply the purchase of " his blood to them for whom he shed it:" All this is contained in that famous scripture, Heb. x. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14. Or, more briefly, the priesthood of Christ is that whereby he expiated the sins of men, and obtained the favour of God for them, Col. i. 20, 22. Rom. v. 10. But because I shall insist more largely upon the several parts and fruits of this office, it shall here suffice to speak this much as to its general nature; which was the first thing proposed for explication.

Secondly, The necessity of Christ's priesthood comes next to be opened. Touching which, I affirm, according to the scriptures, it was necessary, in order to our salvation, that such a Priest should, by such a sacrifice, appear before God for us.

The truth of this assertion will be cleared by these two principles, which are evident in the scripture, viz. That God stood upon full satisfaction, and would not remit one sin without it: and that fallen man is totally incapable of tendering him any such satisfaction; therefore Christ, who only can, must do it, or we perish.

1. *God stood upon full satisfaction, and would not remit one sin without it.* This will be cleared *from the nature of sin*; and *from the veracity and wisdom of God.*

(1.) From the *nature of sin*, which deserves that the sinner should suffer for it. Penal evil, in a course of justice, follows moral evil. Sin and sorrow ought to go together; betwixt these is a necessary connection, Rom. vi. 13. "The wages of sin is death."

(2.) The *veracity of God requires it.* The word is gone out of his mouth; Gen. ii. 17. " in the day that thou eatest thereof, " thou shalt surely die:" *certo ac statim morieris.* From that time he was instantly and certainly obnoxious and liable to the death of soul and body. The law pronounces him cursed, "that continues " not in all things that are written therein to do them," Gal. iii. 9. Now, though man's threatenings are often vain and insignificant things, yet God's shall surely take place; " not one tittle of the " law shall fail, till all be fulfilled," Matt. v. 18. God will be true in his threatenings, though thousands and millions perish.

(3.) The wisdom of God, by which he governs the rational world, admits not of a dispensation or relaxation of the threatenings without satisfaction *: for, as good no king, as no laws for government; as good no law, as no penalty; and as good no penalty, as no execution. To this purpose one well observes; " It " is altogether indecent, especially to the wisdom and righteous- " ness of God, that that which provoketh the execution, should

* Dr Reynolds on Psal. cx. p. 409.

Digitized by Google

" procure the abrogation of his law; that that ſhould ſupplant and " undermine the law, for the alone preventing whereof the law " was before eſtabliſhed." How could it be expected, that men ſhould fear and tremble before God, when they ſhould find themſelves more feared than hurt by his threats againſt ſin! So then God ſtood upon ſatisfaction, and would admit no treaty of peace, on any other ground.

Object. Let none here object, that reconciliation upon this only ſcore of ſatisfaction, is derogatory to the riches of grace; or that we allow not God what we do men, viz. to forgive an injury freely, without ſatisfaction.

Sol. Free forgiveneſs to us, and full ſatisfaction made to God by Jeſus Chriſt for us, are not ἀσυμφωνα, things inconſiſtent with each other, as in its proper place ſhall be more fully cleared to you. And for denying that to God which we allow to men; you muſt know, that man and man ſtand on even ground: man is not capable of being wronged and injured by man, as God is by man, there is no compariſon between the nature of the offences.

To conclude, man only can freely forgive man; in a private capacity, ſo far as wrong concerns himſelf; but ought not to do ſo in a public capacity, as he is judge, and bound to execute juſtice impartially. God is our Law-giver and Judge: he will not diſpenſe with violations of the law, but ſtrictly ſtands upon complete ſatisfaction.

2. Man can tender to God no ſatisfaction of his own, for the wrong done by his ſin. He finds no way to compenſate and make God amends, either by doing, or by ſuffering his will.

(1.) Not by doing: this way is ſhut up to all the world; none can ſatisfy God, or reconcile himſelf to him this way; for it is evident our beſt works are ſinful; " All our righteouſneſs is as " filthy rags," Iſa. lxiv. 6. And it is ſtrange any ſhould imagine, that one ſin ſhould make ſatisfaction for another. If it be ſaid, not what is ſinful in our duties, but what is ſpiritual, pure and good, may ingratiate us with God; it is at hand to reply, that what is good in any of our duties, is a debt we owe to God, yea, we owe him perfect obedience; and it is not imaginable how we ſhould pay one debt by another; quit a former by contracting a new engagement. If we do any thing that is good, we are beholden to grace for it, John xv. 5. 2 Cor. iii. 5. 1 Cor. xv. 10. In a word, thoſe that have had as much to plead on that ſcore as any now living, have quitted, and utterly given up all hopes of appeaſing and ſatisfying the juſtice of God, that way. It is like, holy Job feared God, and eſchewed evil as much as any of you; yet he ſaith, Job ix. 20, 21. " If I juſtify myſelf, mine own " mouth ſhall condemn me; if I ſay I am perfect, it ſhall alſo

Digitized by Google

" prove me perverſe. Though I were perfect, yet would I not " know my ſoul; I would deſpiſe my life." It may be David was a man as much after the heart of God as you; yet he ſaid, Pſal. cxliii. 2. " Enter not into judgment with thy ſervant; for in " thy ſight ſhall no man be juſtified." It is like Paul lived as holy, heavenly, and fruitful a life as the beſt of you, and far, far beyond you; yet he ſaith, 1 Cor. iv. 4. " I know (or am conſcious to " myſelf) of nothing, yet am I not hereby juſtified." His ſincerity might *comfort* him, but could not *juſtify* him. And what need I ſay more? The Lord hath ſhut up this way to all the world; and the ſcriptures ſpeak it roundly and plainly: Rom. iii. 20. " Therefore, by the deeds of the law, there ſhall no fleſh be juſti- " fied in his ſight." Compare Gal. iii. 21. Rom. viii. 3.

(2.) And as man can never reconcile himſelf to God by *doing*, ſo neither by *ſuffering*: that is equally impoſſible; for no ſufferings can ſatisfy God, but ſuch as are proportionable to the offence we ſuffer for. And if ſo, an infinite ſuffering muſt be borne: I ſay infinite, for ſin is an infinite evil, objectively conſidered, as it wrongs an infinite God. Now ſufferings may be ſaid to be infinite, either in reſpect of their *weight*, exceeding all bounds and limits; the letting out of the wrath and fury of an infinite God: or in reſpect of *duration*, being endleſs and everlaſting. In the firſt ſenſe, no creature can bear an infinite wrath, it would ſwallow us up. In the ſecond, it may be borne as the damned do; but then, ever to be ſuffering, is never to have ſatisfied.

So that no man can be his own prieſt, to reconcile himſelf to God by what he can do or ſuffer. And therefore, one that is able by doing and ſuffering, to reconcile him, muſt undertake it, or we periſh. Thus you ſee plainly and briefly the general nature and neceſſity of Chriſt's prieſthood.

From both theſe, ſeveral uſeful corollaries, or practical deductions, offer themſelves.

Corollary 1. This ſhews, in the firſt place, *the incomparable excellency of the reformed Chriſtian religion above all other religions, known to, or profeſſed in the world.* What other religions ſeek, the Chriſtian religion only finds, even a ſolid foundation for true peace and ſettlement of conſcience. While the Jews ſeek it in vain in the law; the *Mahometan* in his external and ridiculous obſervances; the *Papiſt* in his own merits; the *believer* only finds it in the blood of this great Sacrifice; this, and nothing leſs than this, can pacify a diſtreſſed conſcience, labouring under the weight of its own guilt. Conſcience demands no leſs to ſatisfy it, than God demands to ſatisfy him. The grand inqueſt of conſcience is, is God ſatisfied? If he be ſatisfied, I am ſatisfied. Woful is the ſtate of that man, that feels the worm of conſcience nibbling on the moſt

Digitized by Google

tender part of the soul, and hath no relief against it; that feels the intolerable scalding wrath of God burning within, and hath nothing to cool it. Hear me, you that slight the troubles of conscience, that call them fancies and melancholy whimsies; if you ever had had but one sick night for sin, if you had ever felt that shame, fear, horror, and despair, which are the dismal effects of an accusing and condemning conscience, you would account it an unspeakable mercy to hear of a way for the discharge of a poor sinner from that guilt: you would kiss the feet of that messenger that could bring you tidings of peace; you would call him blessed, that should direct you to an effectual remedy. Now, whoever thou art, that pinest away in thine iniquities, that droopest from day to day under the present wounds, the dismal presages of conscience, know that thy soul and peace can never meet, till thou art persuaded to come to this blood of sprinkling.

The blood of this sacrifice speaks better things than the blood of *Abel*. The blood of this sacrifice is the blood of God, Acts xx. 28. invaluably precious blood, 1 Pet. i. 18. One drop of it infinitely excels the blood of all mere creatures, Heb. x. 4, 5, 6. Such is the blood that must do thee good. Lord, I must have such blood (saith conscience) as is capable of giving thee full satisfaction, or it can give me no peace. The blood of all the cattle upon a thousand hills cannot do this. What is the blood of beasts to God? the blood of all the men in the world can do nothing in this case. What is our polluted blood worth? No, no, it is the blood of God, that must satisfy both thee and me.

Yea, Christ's blood is not only the blood of God, but it is blood shed in thy stead, and in thy place and room, Gal. iii. 13. "He "was made a curse for us." And so it becomes sin-pardoning blood, Heb. ix. 22. Eph. i. 7. Col. i. 14. Rom. iii. 26. and consequently, conscience-pacifying, and soul-quieting blood, Col. i. 20. Eph. ii. 13, 14. Rom. iii. 26. O bless God, that ever the news of this blood came to thine ears. With hands and eyes lifted up to heaven, admire that grace that cast thy lot in a place where this joyful sound rings in the ears of poor sinners. What had thy case been, if thy mother had brought thee forth in the deserts of Arabia, or in the wastes of America! Or that if thou hadst been nursed up by a popish father, who could have told thee of no other remedy when in distress for sin, but to go such a pilgrimage, to whip and lash thyself, to satisfy an angry God! Surely the pure light of the gospel shining upon this generation, is a mercy never to be duly valued, never to be enough prized.

Corollary 2. *Hence also be informed of the necessity of faith, in order to a state and sense of peace with God:* for to what purpose is the blood of Christ our sacrifice shed, unless it be actually and personally ap-

Digitized by Google

plied, and appropriated by faith? You know when the sacrifices under the law were brought to be slain, he that brought it was to put his * hand upon the head of the sacrifice, and so it was accepted for him, to make an atonement, Lev. i. 4. not only to signify, that how it was no more his, but God's, the property being transferred by a kind of manumission; nor yet that he voluntarily gave it to the Lord as his own free act; but principally it noted the putting off his sins, and the penalty due to him for them, upon the head of the sacrifice: and so it implied in it an execration, as if he had said, upon thy head be the evil. So the learned observe; the *ancient Egyptians* were wont expressly to imprecate, when they sacrificed; *if any evil be coming upon us, or upon* Egypt, *let it turn and rest upon this head*, laying their hand, at these words, on the sacrifice's head. And upon that ground, saith the † *Historian*, none of them would eat of the head of any living creature. You must also lay the hand of faith upon Christ your sacrifice, not to imprecate, but apply and appropriate him to your own souls, he having been made a curse for you.

To this the whole gospel tends, even to persuade sinners to apply Christ, and his blood to their own souls. To this he invited us, Matth. xi. 28. "Come unto me all ye that labour, and are "heavy laden, and I will give you rest." For this end our sacrifice was lifted up upon the altar; John iii. 14, 15. "As Moses "lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man "be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, "but have everlasting life." The effects of the law, not only upon the conscience, filling it with torments, but upon the whole person, bringing death upon it, are here shadowed out by the stingings of fiery serpents; and Christ by the brazen serpent which Moses exalted for the Israelites, that were stung, to look unto. And as by looking to it, they were healed; so by believing, or looking to Christ in faith, our souls are healed. Those that looked not to the brazen serpent, died infallibly; so must all that look not to Jesus, our sacrifice, by faith. It is true, the death of Christ is the meritorious cause of remission, but faith is the instrumental applying cause ‡; and as Christ's blood is necessary in its place, so is our faith in its place also. For to the actual remission of sin, and peace of conscience, there must be a co-operation of all the causes

* And he shall put his hand, signifying that he casts his sins and the punishment due to them, upon the head of the victim: as among the Greeks εις την αυτου κεφαλην, upon his head, is a kind of imprecation. *Drusius and Menochius.*

† Herod. 2. 39.

‡ It is a rule, that where there is a total and sufficient cause in act, there the effect must needs follow. But if they be partial causes, then the causes which succeed in order, do not produce their complete effect, until the last cause be in act.

Digitized by Google

of remiſſion and peace. As there is the grace and love of God for an efficient and impulſive cauſe, and the death of Chriſt our ſacrifice, the meritorious cauſe; ſo of neceſſity there muſt be faith, the inſtrumental cauſe. And theſe con-cauſes do all ſweetly meet in their influences, and activities, in our remiſſion, and tranquillity of conſcience; and they are all *(ſuo genere)* in their kind and place abſolutely neceſſary to the procuring and applying of it.

What is the need that the blood of Chriſt is ſhed, if I have no intereſt in it, no ſaving influences from it? O be convinced, this is the end, the buſineſs of life. Faith is the *Phœnix*-grace, as Chriſt is the *Phœnix*-mercy. He is *the gift*, John iv. 10. And this is "the work of God, John vi. 29. The death of Chriſt, the offers and tenders of Chriſt, never ſaved one ſoul in themſelves, without believing application. But, wo is me! how do I ſee ſinners, either not at all touched with the ſenſe of ſin, and ſo being whole, need not the phyſician; or if any be ſtung and wounded with guilt, how do they lick themſelves whole with their own duties and reformations! As phyſicians ſay of wounds, let them be kept clean, and nature will find balſam of its own to heal them: If it be ſo in ſpiritual wounds, what need Chriſt to have left the Father's boſom, and come down to die in the quality and nature of a ſacrifice for us? O if men can but have health, pleaſure, riches, honours, and any way make a ſhift to ſtill a brawling conſcience, that it may not check or interrupt them in theſe enjoyments, Chriſt may go where he will for them.

And I am aſſured, till God ſhew you the face of ſin, in the glaſs of the law, make the ſcorpions and fiery ſerpents, that lurk in the law, and in your own conſciences, to come hiſſing about you, and ſmiting you with their deadly ſtings, till you have had ſome ſick nights, and ſorrowful days for ſin, you will never go up and down ſeeking an intereſt in the blood of his ſacrifice with tears.

But, reader, if ever this be thy condition, then wilt thou know the worth of a Chriſt; then wilt thou have a value for the blood of ſprinkling. As I remember it is ſtoried of our *crook-backed Richard*, when he was put to a rout in a field-battle, and flying on foot from his purſuing enemies; he cried out, *O now, ſaith he, a kingdom for a horſe.* So wilt thou cry, A kingdom for a Chriſt; ten thouſand worlds now, if I had them, for the blood of ſprinkling.

Corollary 3. Is Chriſt your High-prieſt, and is his prieſthood ſo indiſpenſably neceſſary to our ſalvation? *Then freely acknowledge your utter impotency to reconcile yourſelves to God by any thing you can do, or ſuffer;* and let Chriſt have the whole glory of your recovery aſcribed to him. It is highly reaſonable that he that laid down the

Digitized by Google

whole *price*, ſhould have the whole *praiſe*. If any man think, or ſay, he could have made an atonement for himſelf, he doth therein caſt no light reproach upon that profound wiſdom which laid the deſign of our redemption in the death of Chriſt. But of this I have ſpoken elſewhere. And therefore,

Corollary 4. In the laſt place, I rather chuſe to perſuade you to *ſee your neceſſity of this prieſt, and his moſt excellent ſacrifice; and accordingly to make uſe of it.* The beſt of you have polluted natures, poiſoned in the womb with ſin; thoſe natures have need of this ſacrifice, they muſt have the benefit of this blood to pardon and cleanſe them, or be eternally damned. Hear me, ye that never ſpent a tear for the ſin of nature; if the blood of Chriſt be not ſprinkled upon your natures, it had been better for you, that you had been the generation of beaſts, the offſpring of dragons or toads. They have a contemptible, but not a vitiated ſinful nature, as you have.

Your *actual* ſins have need of the prieſt, and his ſacrifice, to procure remiſſion for them. If he take them not away by the blood of his croſs, they can never be taken away, they will lie down with you in the duſt; they will riſe with you and follow you to the judgment-ſeat, crying, We are thy works, and we will follow thee. All thy repentance and tears, couldſt thou weep as many as there be drops in the ocean, can never take away ſin. Thy duties, even the beſt of them, need this ſacrifice. It is in the virtue thereof that they are accepted of God. And were it not that God had reſpect to Chriſt's offering, he would not regard, or look towards thee, or any of thy duties. Thou couldſt no more come near to God, than thou couldſt approach a devouring fire, or dwell with everlaſting burnings.

Well then, ſay, I need ſuch a price every way. Love him in all his offices. See the goodneſs of God in providing ſuch a ſacrifice for thee. Meat, drink, and air, are not more neceſſary to maintain thy natural life, than the death of Chriſt is to give and maintain thy ſpiritual life.

O then, let thy ſoul grow big whilſt meditating of the uſefulneſs and excellency of Chriſt, which is thus diſplayed and unfolded in every branch of the goſpel: And, with a deep ſenſe upon thy heart, let thy lips ſay, *Bleſſed be God for Jeſus Chriſt.*

Digitized by Google

SERMON XII.

Of the Excellency of our High-Prieſt's Oblation, being the firſt Act or Part of his Prieſtly Office.

HEB. x. 14.

For by one offering, he hath perfected for ever them that are ſanctified.

AFTER this more general view and conſideration of the prieſthood of Chriſt, method requires that we come to a nearer and more particular conſideration of the parts thereof; which are his *oblation* and *interceſſion*, anſwerable to the double office of the High-prieſt, offering the blood of the ſacrifices without the holy place, which typed out Chriſt's oblation; and then once a year bringing the blood before the Lord into the moſt holy place, preſenting it before God, and with it ſprinkling the mercy-ſeat, wherein the interceſſion of Chriſt (the other part or act of his prieſthood) was in a lively manner typified to us.

My preſent buſineſs is to open and apply the *oblation* of Chriſt; the efficacy and excellency whereof is excellently illuſtrated, by a compariſon with all other oblations, in the precedent context, and with a ſingular encomium commended to us in theſe words, from the *ſingularity* of it*. It is but one offering; one not only *ſpecifically*, but one *numerically* conſidered; but once offered, and never more to be repeated: for *Chriſt dieth no more*, Rom. vi. 9. He alſo commends it from the *efficacy* of it; by it he hath perfected it, i. e. not only purchaſed a poſſibility of ſalvation, but all that we need to our full perfection. It brings in a moſt intire, complete and perfect righteouſneſs: all that remains to make us perfectly happy, is but the full application of the benefits procured by this oblation for us. Moreover, it is here commended from the *extenſiveneſs* of it; not being reſtrained to a few, but applicable to all the ſaints, in all the ages and places of the world: for this indefinite, *them that are ſanctified*, is equivalent to an univerſal, and is as much as if he had ſaid, To all and every ſaint, from the beginning to the end of the world. Laſtly, He commends it from its *perpetuity; it perfects for ever*, that is, it is of everlaſting efficacy: it ſhall abide as freſh, vigorous and powerful to the end of

* Chriſt's offering is not only one in kind, but in number, becauſe there can be no other offering of him but by means of death, and therefore the diſtinction between a bloody and unbloody ſacrifice is falſe. *Trident. Inſtit.* p. 79.

Digitized by Google

the world, as it was the first moment it was offered up. All runs into this sweet truth:

Doct. *That the oblation made unto God by Jesus Christ, is of unspeakable value, or everlasting efficacy, to perfect all them that are, or shall be sanctified, to the end of the world.*

Out of this fountain flow all the excellent blessings that believers either have, or hope for. Had it not been for this, there had been no such things *in rerum natura*, as justification, adoption, salvation, &c. peace with God and hopes of glory, pardon of sin, and divine acceptation: these, and all other our best mercies, had been but so many *entia rationis*, mere conceits. A man, as one saith, might have haply imagined such things as these, as he may golden mountains, and rivers of liquid gold, and rocks of diamonds: but these things could never have had any real existence *extra mentem*, had not Christ offered up himself a sacrifice to God for us. It is "the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit offered up "himself without spot to God, that purges the conscience from "dead works," Heb. ix. 14. that is, from the sentence of condemnation and death, as it is reflected by conscience, for our works sake.

His appearing before God as our priest, with such an offering for us, is that which removes our guilt and fear together: "He "appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself," Heb. ix. 29. Now, forasmuch as the point before us is of so great weight in itself, and so fundamental to our safety and comfort, I shall endeavour to give you as distinct and clear an account of it, as can consist with that brevity which I must necessarily use. And therefore, reader, apply thy mind attentively to the consideration of this excellent *Priest* that appears before God, and the *sacrifices* he offers, with the properties and adjuncts thereof; the *person* before whom he brings, and to whom he offers it; the *persons for whom* he offers; and the *end for which* this oblation is made.

First, The *Priest* that appears before God with an oblation for us, is Jesus Christ, God-man: the dignity of whose person dignified, and derived an inestimable worth to the offering he made. There were many priests before him, but none like unto him, either for the *purity of his person, or the perpetuity of his priesthood: they were sinful men, and offered for their own sins, as well as the sins of the people, Heb. v. 3. "but he was holy, harm-"less, undefiled, separate from sinners," Heb. vii. 2. He could stand before God, even in the eye of his justice, as a lamb without

* So oblations were offered up in a pure vessel, Isa. lxvi. 20. *Revn.*

Digitized by Google

ſpot. Tho' he made his ſoul an offering for ſin, "yet he had "done no iniquity, nor was any guile found in his mouth," Iſa. liii. 9. And indeed his offering had done us no good, if the leaſt taint of ſin had been found on him. They were mortal men, that "continued not by reaſon of death," Heb. vii. 23. but Chriſt is "a Prieſt for ever," Pſal. cx. 4.

Secondly, The *oblation* or offering he made, was not the blood of beaſts, but his own blood, Heb. ix. 12. And herein he tranſcended all other prieſts, that he had ſomething of his own to offer; he had a body given him to be at his own diſpoſe, to this uſe and purpoſe, Heb, x. 10. "He offered his body:" yea, not only his * body, but his "ſoul was made an offering for ſin," Iſa. liii. 10. We had made a forfeiture of our ſouls and bodies by ſin, and it was neceſſary the ſacrifice of Chriſt ſhould be anſwerable to the debt we owed. And when Chriſt came to offer his ſacrifice, he ſtood not only in the capacity of a prieſt, but alſo in that of a ſurety: and ſo his ſoul ſtood in the ſtead of ours, and his body in the ſtead of our bodies. Now the excellency of this oblation will appear in the following adjuncts and properties of it. This oblation being for the matter of it, the ſoul and body of Jeſus Chriſt, is therefore,

1. *Invaluably precious.* So the apoſtle ſtiles it, 1 Pet. i. 19. "Ye were redeemed τιμιω αιματι, with the precious blood of the "Son of God:" and ſuch it behoved him to offer. For it being offered as an expiatory ſacrifice, it ought to be equivalent, in its own intrinſic value to all the ſouls and bodies that were to be redeemed by it. And ſo it was, and more alſo: for there was a redundency of value, an overplus of merit, which went to make a purchaſe for the redeemed; as will be opened in its place. So that, as one rich diamond is more worth than a thouſand pebbles; one piece of gold, than many counters; ſo the ſoul and body of one Chriſt, are much more excellent than all the ſouls and bodies in the world.

And yet I dare not affirm†, as ſome do, that by reaſon of the

* *Bilſon* and *Feverdentius* affirm, that Chriſt only offered up his body, not his ſoul, upon this weak ground, that if he had offered both, he had not offered one, but two ſacrifices. Againſt whom the learned *Parker*, in his excellent book *de defenſu*, urgeth my text, and thus frees it from that corrupt gloſs. He ſays, fine reaſoning this; as if the whole burnt-offering had not been one ſacrifice, becauſe it was made up of many parts.——Chriſt's ſacrifice is called one, not by oppoſing his body to his ſoul, but by oppoſing his once offering of both body and ſoul, to theſe many ſacrifices, which, by the law of Moſes, were offered up, not once, but frequently. *Parker de defenſu*, lib. III. p. 146.

† That alone can have the nature of puniſhment, which is inflicted by a judge according to law; but it is not agreeable to a law which threatens death, that, for the violation of it, that only ſhould be inflicted which cauſes ſhedding a drop of blood. *John Cameron*, p. 364.

Digitized by Google

infinite precioufneſs of Chriſt's blood, one drop thereof had been ſufficient to have redeemed the whole world: for if one drop had been enough, why was all the reſt, even to the laſt drop, ſhed? Was God cruel, to exact more from him than was needful and ſufficient: Beſides, we muſt remember, that the paſſions of Chriſt, which were inflicted on him as the curſe of the law, theſe only are the paſſions which are ſufficient for our redemption from the curſe of the law; Now it was not a drop of blood, but death which was contained in the curſe: this therefore was neceſſary to be inflicted. But ſurely as none but God can eſtimate the weight and evil of ſin, ſo none but he can comprehend the worth and precioufneſs of the blood of Chriſt, ſhed to expiate it. And being ſo infinitely precious a thing which was offered up to God, it muſt,

2. Needs be a moſt complete and all-ſufficient oblation, fully to expiate the ſins of all for whom it was offered, in all ages of the world. The virtue of this ſacrifice reacheth backward as far as Adam, and reacheth forward to the laſt perſon of the elect ſpringing from him. That the efficacy of it thus reacheth back to Adam, is plain: for, on the account thereof, he is ſtiled "The "Lamb ſlain from the foundation of the world," Rev. xiii. 8.

And to the ſame ſenſe a judicious * expoſitor underſtands thoſe words of Chriſt, John viii. 58. "Before Abraham was, I am." And, look, as the ſun at mid day extends his light and influence, not only forward towards the *Weſt*, but alſo backward towards the *Eaſt*, where he aroſe; ſo did this moſt efficacious ſacrifice reach all the elect in the virtue of it, who died before Chriſt came in the fleſh. It is therefore but a vain cavil, that ſome make againſt the ſatisfaction of Chriſt, to render it needleſs, when they ſay, many were ſaved without it, even as many as were ſaved before the death of Chriſt. † For they ſay, the effect cannot be before the cauſe, which is true of *phyſical*, but not of *moral* cauſes; and ſuch was Chriſt's ſatisfaction. As for example, a captive is freed out of priſon from the time that his ſurety undertakes for him, and promiſes his ranſom; here the captive is actually delivered, though the ranſom that delivered him be not yet actually paid. So it was in this caſe; Chriſt had engaged to the Father to ſatisfy for them, and upon that ſecurity they were delivered.

And the virtue of this oblation not only reaches thoſe believers, that lived and died before Chriſt's day, but it extends itſelf forward to the end of the world. Hence Heb. xiii. 8. Chriſt is ſaid

* The efficacy and grace of Chriſt, as he is the Redeemer of the world, is common to all ages. *Calvin on this place.*

† A natural cauſe goes before its effect, in reſpect of time, not ſo, a moral cauſe. *Cameron's works, p.* 36.

Digitized by Google

to be "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever;" *i. e.* "* He is "not so a Saviour to us that now live, as that he was not their "Saviour also, that believed in him, before us, from the beginning: yet not so a Saviour both to them and us, as that he shall "not be the same to all that shall believe on him to the world's "end."

To the same sense are those words, Heb. xi. 40. rightly paraphrased; "God having provided some better thing for us, that "they without us should not be made perfect:" *q. d.* God hath appointed the accomplishment of the promise of sending the Messiah, to be in the last times†, that they (viz. that lived before Christ) should not be perfected, that is, justified and saved by any thing done in their time, but by looking to our time, and Christ's satisfaction made therein; whereby they and we are perfected together. No tract of time can wear out the virtue of this eternal Sacrifice. It is as fresh, vigorous, and potent now, as the first hour it was offered. And though he *actually* offer it no more, yet he *virtually* continues it by his intercession now in heaven; for there he is still a Priest. And therefore, about sixty years after his ascension, when he gave the Revelation to John, he appears to him in his priestly garment, Rev. i. 13. "Clothed in a garment "down to the feet, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle:" in allusion to the priestly ephod, and curious girdle.

And as the virtue of this oblation reaches backward and forward, to all ages, and to all believers, so to all the sins of all believers, which are fully purged and expiated by it: this no other oblation could do. The legal sacrifices were no real expiations, but rather remembrances of sins, Heb. ix. 9, 12. Heb. x. 3. And all the virtue they had, consisted in their typical relation to this sacrifice, Gal. iii. 23. Heb. ix. 13. And, separate from it, were altogether weak, unprofitable, and insignificant things, Heb. vii. 18. But this blood cleanseth from all sins, 1 John i. 7. all sin, originating, or originated, or actual, flowing from them both. It expiates all fully, without exception, and finally, without revocation. So that by his being made sin for us, we are made not only righteous, but "the righteousness of God in him," 2 Cor. v. 21.

3. And *lastly*, to name no more; being so precious in itself, and so efficacious to expiate sin, it must needs be a most grateful oblation to the Lord, highly pleasing and delightful in his eyes. And so indeed it is said, Eph. v. 2. "He gave himself for us, an

* *Nunc servator non est ita ut olim non fuerit; atque ut non sit servator in æternum.*— Camer. Myrothec. p. 337.

† Dixon on this place.

Digitized by Google

"offering, and a ſacrifice to God, for a ſweet ſmelling ſavour*." Not that God took any delight or content in the bitter ſufferings of Chriſt, ſimply and in themſelves conſidered; but with relation to the end for which he was offered, even our redemption and ſalvation.

Hence aroſe the delight and pleaſure God had in it; this made him take pleaſure in bruiſing him, Iſa. liii. 10. God ſmelt a ſavour of reſt in this ſacrifice. The meaning is, that as men are offended with a ſtench, and their ſtomachs riſe at it, and on the contrary delighted with ſweet odours and fragrancies; ſo the bleſſed God, ſpeaking after the manner of man, is offended, and filled with loathing and abhorrence by our ſins; but infinitely pleaſed and delighted in the offering of Chriſt for them, which came up as an odour of ſweet ſmelling ſavour to him, whereof the coſtly perfumes under the law were types and ſhadows. This was the oblation.

Thirdly, This oblation he brings before God, and to him he offers it up: So ſpeaks the apoſtle, Heb. ix. 14. "Through the eter-"nal Spirit he offered himſelf without ſpot to God." As Chriſt ſuſtained the capacity of a ſurety, ſo God of a creditor, who exacted ſatisfaction from him; that is, he required from him, as our ſurety, the penalty due to us for our ſin. And ſo Chriſt had to do immediately with God, yea, with a God infinitely wronged, and incenſed by ſin againſt us. To this incenſed Majeſty, Chriſt our High-prieſt approached, as to a devouring fire, with the ſacrifice.

Fourthly, The perſons for whom, and in whoſe ſtead he offered himſelf to God, was the whole number of God's elect †, which were given him of the Father, neither more nor leſs: So ſpeak the ſcriptures. He laid down his life for the *ſheep*, John x. 15. for the *church*, Acts xx. 28. for the *children of God*, John xi. 50, 51, 52. It is confeſſed, there is ſufficiency of virtue in this Sacrifice to redeem the whole world, and on that account ſome divines affirm he is called the "Saviour of the world," John iv. 42. *et alibi*. We acknowledge alſo, that he purchaſed the ſervices of others, beſides the elect, to be uſeful to them, as they many ways are. In which ſenſe ‡ others take thoſe ſcriptures that ſpeak ſo

---

* Smelling is attributed to God, to denote his being well pleaſed, his complacency, and favourable acceptance, as a man is refreſhed and delighted with a good ſmell:—to this belongs the Hebrew expreſſion, ריח ניחוח, ſavour of reſt or of ſweetneſs, which is often applied to the ſacrifices offered to God, Exod. xix. 25. Lev. i. 19. *S. Glaſſ. Philolog. Sacra.*

† Divines teach that Chriſt died ſufficiently for all, efficaciouſly for the elect. *Cameron*, as above, p. 535.

‡ Mr Strong.

Digitized by Google

univerſally of the extent of his death. We alſo acknowledge that the elect being ſcattered in all parts, and among all ranks of men in the world, and unknown to thoſe that are to tender Jeſus Chriſt to men by the preaching of the goſpel; the ſtile of the goſpel (as it was neceſſary) is by ſuch indefinite expreſſions ſuited to the general tenders they are to make of him: but that the efficacy and ſaving virtue of this all-ſufficient ſacrifice, is co-extended with God's election, ſo that they all, and no others can, or ſhall reap the ſpecial benefits of it, is too clear in the ſcriptures to be denied, Eph. v. 23. John xvii. 2, 9, 19, 20. John x. 26, 27, 28. 1 Tim. iv. 10.

Fifthly, The deſign and end of this oblation was to atone, pacify, and reconcile God, by giving him a full and adequate compenſation or ſatisfaction for the ſins of theſe his elect: ſo ſpeaks the apoſtle, Col. i. 20. "And having made peace, through the "blood of his croſs, by him to reconcile all things unto himſelf; "by him, I ſay, whether they be things in earth, or things in "heaven." So 2 Cor. v. 19. "God was in Chriſt, reconciling "the world to himſelf." Reconciliation is the making up of that breach cauſed by ſin, between us and God, and reſtoring us again to his favour and friendſhip. For this end Chriſt offered up himſelf to God; I ſay, not for this end only, but more eſpecially; hence it is called ιλασμος, a propitiation; and ſo the Seventy render that place, Numb. xv. ιλασμενος κριος, *the propitiating ram.* But here I would not be miſtaken, as though the reconciliation were made only between us and God the Father, by the blood of the croſs; for we were reconciled by it to the whole Trinity. Every ſin being made againſt the divine Majeſty, it muſt needs follow, that the three Perſons, having the ſame divine eſſence, muſt be all offended by the commiſſion, and ſo all reconciled by the expiation and remiſſion of the ſame. But reconciliation is ſaid to be with the Father, becauſe, though the works of the Trinity, *ad extra*, be undivided, and what one doth, all do; and what is done to one, is done to all; yet by this form and manner of expreſſion, (as a learned * man well obſerves), the ſcriptures point out the proper office of each Perſon. The Father receives us into favour; the Son mediates, and gives the ranſom which procures it; the Spirit applies and ſeals this to the perſons and hearts of believers. However, being reconciled to the Father, we are alſo reconciled to the Son, and Spirit, as they are one God in three Perſons. And if it be objected, that then Chriſt offered up a ſacrifice, or laid down a price to reconcile us to himſelf; I ſhall more fairly and directly meet with, and ſatisfy that objection, when I come

* Zanch. *de tribus Elohim.*

Digitized by Google

to ſpeak of Chriſt's ſatisfaction, which is one of the principal fruits of this excellent oblation. For the preſent, this may inform you about the nature and precious worth of Chriſt's oblation. The uſes whereof follow in theſe five practical inferences.

Inference 1. Hence it follows, *That actual believers are fully freed from the guilt of their ſins, and ſhall never more come under condemnation.*

The obligation of ſin is perfectly aboliſhed by the virtue of this ſacrifice. When Chriſt became our ſacrifice, he both bare, and bare away our ſins. *Firſt*, They were laid upon him, then expiated by him: ſo much is imported in that word, Heb. ix. 28. "Chriſt was once offered to bear the ſins of many*." *To bear*, the word is a full and emphatical word, ſignifying not only to bear, but to bear away. So John i. 29. "Behold the Lamb of "God, ο αριων, that taketh away the ſins of the world;" not only *declaratively*, or by way of manifeſtation to the conſcience; but *really*, making a purgation of ſin, as it is in Hebrews i. 3. καθαρισμον ποιησαμενος, word for word, *a purgation being made*, and not declared only. Now, how great a mercy is this, "that by "him, all that believe ſhould be juſtified from all things from "which they could not be juſtified by the law of Moſes," Acts xiii. 39. What ſhall we call this grace? ſurely, we ſhould do ſomewhat more than admire it, and faint under the ſenſe of ſuch a mercy. "Bleſſed is he, whoſe tranſgreſſion is forgiven, whoſe "ſin is covered," Pſal. xxxii. or, O the bleſſedneſs or felicities of him that is pardoned! who can expreſs the mercies, comforts, happineſs of ſuch a ſtate as this? Reader, let me beg thee, if thou be one of this pardoned number, to look over the cancelled bonds, and ſee what vaſt ſums are remitted to thee. Remember what thou waſt in thy natural eſtate; poſſibly thou waſt in that black bill, 1 Cor. vi. 3. What, and yet pardoned! full and finally pardoned, and that freely, as to any hand that thou hadſt in the procurement of it! what canſt thou do leſs, than fall down at the feet of free grace, and kiſs thoſe feet that moved ſo freely towards ſo vile a ſinner? It is not long ſince thy iniquities were upon thee, and thou pinedſt away in them. Their guilt could by no creature-power be ſeparated from thy ſoul. Now they are removed from thee, as far as the *Eaſt* from the *Weſt*, Pſal. ciii. 11. So that, when the Eaſt and Weſt, which are the two oppoſite points of heaven, meet, then thy ſoul and its guilt may meet again together.

* The Greek word ανηνεγκειν, ſignifies to lift up, or carry upwards: ſo the Syriac, εβαστασεν και ανηνεγκειν, he carried and took upwards. *Beza's Greek Annot.* on 1 Pet. ii. 24. The verb נשה is of the ſame ſignification.

Digitized by Google

O the unſpeakable efficacy of Chriſt's ſacrifice, which extends to all ſins! 1 John i. 7. "The blood of Chriſt cleanſeth" from all ſins, ſins paſt and preſent, without exception. And ſome divines of good note affirm, all ſins to come alſo; for, (ſaith Mr *Paul Blains*), original ſin, in which all future ſins are, as fruits in the root, is pardoned; and if theſe were not pardoned, they would void and invalidate former pardons. And laſtly, it would derogate from the moſt plenary ſatisfaction of Chriſt. But the moſt ſay, and, I think, truly, that all the paſt ſins of believers are pardoned, without *revocation*, all their preſent ſins without *exception*; but not their ſins to come by way of *anticipation*: and yet for them there is a pardon of courſe, which is applied on their repentance, and application of Chriſt's blood; ſo that none of them ſhall make void former pardons. O let theſe things ſlide ſweetly to thy melting heart!

Inf. 2. From this oblation Chriſt made of himſelf to God for our ſins, we infer the *inflexible ſeverity of divine Juſtice, which could be no other way diverted from us, and appeaſed, but by the blood of Chriſt.* If Chriſt had not preſented himſelf to God for us, Juſtice would not have ſpared us: And if he do appear before God as our ſurety, it will not ſpare him; Rom. viii. 32. "He ſpared not "his own Son, but delivered him up to death for us all." If forbearance might have been expected from any, ſurely it might from God, "who is very pitiful, and full of tender mercy," James v. 11; yet God in this caſe ſpared not. If one might have expected ſparing mercy and abatement from any, ſurely Chriſt might moſt of all expect it from his own Father; yet you hear, God ſpared not *his own Son.* Sparing mercy is the loweſt degree of mercy, yet it was denied to Chriſt: he abated him not a minute of the time appointed for his ſuffering, nor one degree of wrath he was to bear: nay, though in the garden Chriſt fell upon the ground, and ſweat clodders of blood, and in that unparalleled agony ſcrued up his ſpirit to the higheſt intention, in that pitiful cry, "Father, "if it be poſſible, let this cup paſs;" and though he brake out upon the croſs, in that heart-rending complaint, "My God, my God, "why haſt thou forſaken me?" yet no abatement; Juſtice will not bend in the leaſt; but having to do with him on this account, reſolves upon ſatisfaction from his blood. If this be ſo, what is the caſe of thy ſoul, reader, if thou be a man or woman that haſt no intereſt in this ſacrifice? For if theſe things be done in (Chriſt) the green tree, what will be done to (thee) the dry tree? Luke xxiii. 31. "* That is, if God ſo deal with me, that I am not only in-

* Ει ταυτα ποιουσιν, εν εμοι εγκαρπω και ατιθαλει και αρξωω δια την θειοτητα, τι γενηται εν υμιν ακαρποις και παντης δικαιοσυνης ζωοποιουντος υστερημενοις. Thus Theophilact beautifully paraphraſes on that paſſage.

Digitized by Google

" nocent, but like a green and fruitful tree, full of all delectable " fruits of holineſs; yet if the fire of his indignation thus ſeize " upon me, what will be your condition, that are both barren " and guilty, void of all good fruit, and full of all unrighteouſneſs," and ſo like dry ſeary wood, are fitted as fewel to the fire? Conſider with thyſelf, man, how canſt thou imagine thou canſt ſupport that infinite wrath that Chriſt grappled with in the room of God's elect! He had the ſtrength of a Deity to ſupport him, Iſa. xlii. 1. " Behold my ſervant whom I uphold." He had the fulneſs of his Spirit to prepare him, Iſa. lxi. 11. He had the miniſtry of an angel, who came poſt from heaven to relieve him in his agony, Luke xxii. 43. He had the ear of his Father to hear him, for he cried, " and was heard in that he feared," Heb. v. 7. He was aſſured of the victory, before the combat; he knew he ſhould be juſtified, Iſa. l. 8. and yet for all this he was ſore amazed, and ſorrowful even to death, and his heart was melted like wax in the midſt of his bowels. If the caſe ſtood thus with Chriſt, notwithſtanding all theſe advantages he had to bear the wrath of God for a little time; how doſt thou think, a poor worm as thou art, to dwell with everlaſting burnings, or contend with devouring fire? Luther ſaw ground enough for what he ſaid, when he cried out, " I will have nothing to do with an abſolute God*," i. e. with a God out of Chriſt: for, " it is a fearful thing to fall into " the hands of the living God." Wo and alas for evermore to that man who meets a juſt and righteous God without a Mediator! Whoever thou art that readeſt theſe lines, I beſeech thee, by the mercies of God, by all the regard and love thou haſt to thy own ſoul, neglect not time, but make quick and ſure work of it. Get an intereſt in this ſacrifice quickly, what elſe will be thy ſtate when vaſt eternity opens to ſwallow thee up? what wilt thou do, man, when thine eye-ſtrings and heart-ſtrings are breaking? O what a fearful ſhriek will thy conſcience give, when thou art preſented before the dreadful God, and no Chriſt to ſcreen thee from his indignation! Happy is that man who can ſay in a dying hour, as one did†, who being deſired, a little before his diſſolution, to give his friends a little taſte of his preſent hopes, and the grounds of them, chearfully anſwered, I will let you know how it is with me: then ſtretching forth his hand, ſaid,

" Here is the grave, the wrath of God, and devouring flame, " the juſt puniſhment of ſin, on the one ſide: and here am I, " a poor ſinful ſoul, on the other ſide: but this is my comfort, " the covenant of grace, which is eſtabliſhed upon ſo many ſure " promiſes, hath ſaved all. There is an act of oblivion paſſed in

* *Nolo Deum abſolutum.* † Mr William Lyford.

Digitized by Google

" heaven: *I will forgive their iniquities, and their ſins will I remem-*
" *ber no more* This is the bleſſed privilege of all within the cove-
" nant, among whom I am one." O it is ſweet at all times, eſpecially at ſuch a time, to ſee the reconciled face of God, through Jeſus Chriſt, and hear the voice of peace through the blood of the croſs!

Inf. 3. Hath Chriſt offered up himſelf a ſacrifice to God for us? *Then let us improve, in every condition, this ſacrifice, and labour to get hearts duly affected with ſuch a ſight as faith can give us of it.* Whatever the condition or complaint of any Chriſtian is, the beholding the Lamb of God, that taketh away the ſin of the world, may give him ſtrong ſupport, and ſweet relief. Do you complain of the hardneſs of your hearts, and want of love to Chriſt? behold him as offered up to God for you; and ſuch a ſight, (if any in the world will do it) will melt your hard hearts. Zech. xii. 10. " They ſhall look upon me whom they have pierced, and ſhall " mourn." It is reported of Johannes Milius, that he was never obſerved to ſpeak of Chriſt and his ſufferings, but his eyes would drop. Art thou too little touched and unaffected with the evil of ſin? Is it thy complaint, Chriſtian, that thou canſt not make ſin bear ſo hard upon thy heart as thou wouldſt? conſider but what thou haſt now read; realize this ſacrifice by faith, and try what efficacy there is in it to make ſin for ever bitter as death to thy ſoul. Suppoſe thine own Father had been ſtabb'd to the heart with ſuch a knife, and his blood were upon it, wouldſt thou delight to ſee, or endure to uſe that knife any more? ſin is the knife that ſtabb'd Chriſt to the heart; this ſhed his blood. Surely, you can never make light of that which lay ſo heavy upon the ſoul and body of Jeſus Chriſt.

Or is your heart preſt down even to deſpondency, under the guilt of ſin, ſo that you cry, how can ſuch a ſinner as I be pardoned? my ſin is greater than can be forgiven? " Behold the " Lamb of God, that taketh away the ſin of the world." Remember that no ſin can ſtand before the efficacy of his blood. 1 John i. 7. " The blood of Jeſus Chriſt cleanſeth from all ſin." This ſacrifice makes unto God full ſatisfaction.

Are you at any time ſtaggering through unbelief? filled with unbelieving ſuſpicions of the promiſes? Look hither, and you ſhall ſee them all ratified and eſtabliſhed in the blood of the croſs, ſo that hills and mountains ſhall ſooner ſtart from their own baſis and centers, than one tittle of the promiſe fail: Heb ix. 17, 18, 19.

Do you at any time find your hearts fretting, diſquieted, and impatient under every petty croſs and trial? See how quietly Chriſt your ſacrifice came to the altar, how meekly and patiently

Digitized by Google

he ſtood under all the wrath of God and men together. This will ſilence, convince and ſhame you.

In a word, here you will ſee ſo much of the grace of God, and love of Chriſt, in providing and becoming a ſacrifice for you: you will ſee God taking vengeance againſt ſin, but ſparing the ſinner: you will ſee Chriſt ſtanding as the body of ſin alone; for "he was "made ſin for us, that we might be made the righteouſneſs of "God in him:" that whatever corruption burdens, this, in the believing application, will ſupport; whatever grace is defective, this will revive it.

Bleſſed be God for Jeſus Chriſt.

SERMON XIII.

Of the Interceſſion of Chriſt our High-prieſt, being the ſecond Act or Part of his Prieſtly Office.

HEB. vii. 25.

Wherefore he is able alſo to ſave them to the uttermoſt, that come unto God by him, ſeeing he ever liveth to make interceſſion for them.

HAVING diſpatched the firſt part, or act of Chriſt's prieſthood, conſiſting in his *Oblation;* we come to the other branch of it, conſiſting in his * *Interceſſion,* which is nothing elſe but the virtual continuation of his offering once made on earth; that being *medium reconciliationis,* the means of reconciling; this, *medium applicationis,* the way and means of his applying to us the benefits purchaſed by it.

This ſecond part, or branch of his prieſthood, was typified by the High-prieſt's entering with the blood of the ſacrifice and ſweet incenſe into the holy place: Lev. xvi. 12, 13, 14. "And he ſhall "take the cenſer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar "before the Lord, and his hands full of ſweet incenſe beaten "ſmall, and bring it within the vail. And he ſhall put the in-"cenſe upon the fire before the Lord, that the cloud of the in-"cenſe may cover the mercy-ſeat that is upon the teſtimony, that "he die not. And he ſhall take the blood of the bullock, and "ſprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy-ſeat, eaſtward," &c.

* Seeing the redemption which he wrought is the foundation of his interceſſion, ——therefore the ſcripture uſes to mention the redemption and the interceſſion as two inſeparable parts of Chriſt's ſacrifice. *Ravanella on the word* interceed.

Digitized by Google

Christ's offering himself on earth, answered to the killing of the sacrifice without; and his entering into heaven, there to intercede, was that which answered to the priest's going with blood, and his hands full of incense, within the vail. So that this is a part, yea, a special part of Christ's priesthood; and so necessary to it, that if he had not done this, all his work on earth had signified nothing; nor had he been a priest, *i. e.* a complete and perfect priest, if he had remained on earth, Heb. viii. 4. because the very design and end of shedding his blood on earth had been frustrated, which was to carry it before the Lord into heaven. So that this is the principal perfective part of the priesthood: he acted the first part on earth, in a state of deep abasement, in the form of a servant; but he acts this in glory, whereto he is taken up, that he may fulfil his design in dying, and give the work of our salvation its last completing act. So much is imported in this scripture, which tells us, by reason hereof, he "is able to save to the ut-"termost," &c.

The words contain an encouragement to believers, to come to God in the way of faith, drawn from the intercession of Christ in heaven for them. In which you may take notice of these principal parts.

1. The quality of the persons here encouraged, who are described by a direct act of faith, as poor recumbents that are going out of themselves to God by faith; but conscious of great unworthiness in themselves, and thence apt to be discouraged.

2. The encouragement propounded to such believers, drawn from the ability of Jesus Christ, in whose name they go to the Father, to save them to the uttermost, *i. e.* fully, perfectly, completely; for so this emphatical word, εις το παντελες *, signifies, the saving us wholly, thoroughly, completely, and altogether; giving our salvation its last act and completion.

3. The ground or reason of this his saving ability: "Seeing he "ever liveth to make intercession;" *i. e.* he hath not only offered up his blood to God upon the tree, as a full price to purchase pardon and grace for believers; but lives in heaven, and that for ever, to apply unto us, in the way of intercession, all the fruits, blessings, and benefits, that that precious blood of his deserves, and hath procured as a price for them. The words thus opened, the point I shall single out, from among many that lie in them, as most suitable to my design and purpose, is this;

* The Greek words [Εις το παντελες, and εις το διηνεκες,] differ in their emphasis, but not as to the subject-matter. For the latter properly signifies a perpetuity of time: The other not only this, but perfection in all respects. *Cameron.*

Digitized by Google

Doct. *That Jesus our High-priest lives for ever, in the capacity of a potent Intercessor, in heaven for believers.*

Here we will enquire, *First*, What it is for Christ to be an intercessor. *Secondly*, By what acts he performs that work in heaven. *Thirdly*, Whence the potency and prevalency of his intercession is. *Fourthly*, and lastly, How he lives for ever to make intercession for us.

First, What it is for Christ to be an intercessor for us. To intercede in general, is to go betwixt two parties, to intreat, argue, and plead with one for the other. And of this there are two sorts; 1. *Ex charitate, ut fratres*, that whereby one Christian prays and pleads with God for another, 1 Tim. ii. 1. 2. *Ex officio mediatorio*, that whereby Christ, as an act of office, presents himself before God to request for us. Betwixt these two is this difference, that the former is performed not in our own, but in another's name; we can tender no request to God immediately, or for our own sake, either for ourselves, or for others: John xvi. 23. "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you." But the latter, which is proper to Christ, is an intercession with God for us, in his own name, and upon the account of his own proper merit; the one is a private act of charity, the other a public act of office: and so he is our advocate or court-friend, as Satan is our accuser or court-adversary. Satan is ὁ ἀντίδικος, one that charges us before God, 1 Pet. v. 8. and continually endeavours to make breaches between us and God. Christ is ὁ παράκλητος, our attorney, or advocate, that pleads for us, and continues peace and friendship between us and God, 1 John ii. 2. "If any man sin, "we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

And thus to make intercession, is the peculiar and incommunicable prerogative of Jesus Christ; none but he can go in his own name to God. And in that sense we are to understand that place, Ezek. xliv. 2, 3. "Then said the Lord unto me, This gate shall "be shut, it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter in by "it, because the Lord the God of Israel hath entered in by it, "therefore it shall be shut. It is for the prince, the prince he "shall sit in it, to eat bread before the Lord," &c. The great broad gate, called here the *prince's gate*, signifies that abundant and direct entrance that Christ had into heaven by his own merits, and in his own name *; this, saith the Lord, shall be shut, no man shall enter in by it; all other men must come thither, as it were, by collateral or side doors, which looked all towards the

* See Deodati, and our English Annot. on this place.

Digitized by Google

altar, *viz.* by virtue of the Mediator, and through the benefit of his death imputed to them.

And yet, though God hath for ever ſhut up and barred this way to all the children of men, telling us that no man ſhall ever have acceſs to him in his own name, as Chriſt the Prince had; how do ſome, notwithſtanding, ſtrive to force open the Prince's gate *? So do they, that found the interceſſion of ſaints upon their own works and merits, thereby robbing Chriſt of his peculiar glory; but all that ſo approach God, approach a devouring fire; Chriſt only, in the virtue of his blood, thus comes before him, to make interceſſion for us.

Secondly, We will enquire wherein the interceſſion of Chriſt in heaven conſiſts, or by what acts he performs his glorious office there. And the ſcriptures place it in three things:

1. *In his preſenting himſelf before the Lord in our names, and upon our account*†. So we read in Heb. ix. 28. "Chriſt is entered into "heaven itſelf, now to appear in the preſence of God for us." The apoſtle manifeſtly alludes to the High-prieſt's appearing in the holy of holies, which was the figure of heaven, preſenting to the Lord the names of the twelve tribes of Iſrael, which were on his breaſt and ſhoulders, Exod. xxviii. 9, 12, 28, 29. To which the church is ſuppoſed to allude in that requeſt, Cant. viii. 6. "Set me "as a ſeal upon thine heart, as a ſeal upon thine arm." Now the very ſight of Chriſt, our High-prieſt in heaven, prevails exceedingly with God, and turns away his diſpleaſure from us. As when God looks upon the rainbow, which is the ſign of the covenant, he remembers the earth in mercy: ſo when he looks on Chriſt, his heart muſt needs be towards us, upon his account; and therefore in Rev. iv. 3. Chriſt is compared to a rainbow encompaſſing the throne.

2. Chriſt performs his interceſſion-work in heaven‡, not by a naked appearing in the preſence of God only, but alſo *by preſenting his blood, and all his ſufferings to God, as a moving plea on our account.* Whether he makes any proper oral interceſſion there, as he did

---

* Peter Lombard, book 4. diſt. 45.

† We muſt ſee what is meant by *his appearing* for us *before God:* This has reſpect to the types of the ancient High-prieſt, who, having entered within the vail, was ſaid to appear before God for the people, in regard he preſented himſelf before God with the blood of the goat that was the ſin-offering; and by his prayers, requeſted, as a ſupplicant, that he ſhould be propitious to his ſins, and theſe of the people, not for the ſake of the blood of that goat, but of that which was repreſented by it, the blood of Chriſt the Mediator to be ſhed afterwards. *Dod. Parens on this place.*

‡ By willing and prudently deſiring, as formerly on earth, ſo alſo when with his Father in heaven, he inſiſts that the virtue and efficacy of his death may be applied to our ſalvation. *Synopſis purioris Theol.* p. 346.

Digitized by Google

on earth, is not so clear; some incline to it, and think it is countenanced by Zechariah, chap. i. 12, 13. Where Christ our Intercessor presents a proper vocal request to the Father, in the behalf of his people; saying, "O Lord of hosts, how long wilt thou not "have mercy on Jerusalem, and on the cities of Judah, against "which thou hast had indignation these threescore and ten years? "And the Lord answered him with good and comfortable words." And so Acts ii. 23. as soon as he came to heaven, he is said (and that is the first fruits of his intercession) *to obtain the promise of the Holy Ghost.* But sure I am, an interceding voice is by an usual *prosopopeia* attributed to his blood; which in Heb. xii. 24. is said "to speak better things than that of Abel." Now Abel's blood and so Christ's, do cry unto God, as the hire of the labourers unjustly detained, or the whole creation, which is in bondage, through our sins, is said to cry and groan in the ears of the Lord, Jam. v. 4. Rom. viii. 22. not vocally, but efficaciously. A rare illustration of this efficacious intercession of Christ in heaven, we have in that famous story of Amintas*, who appeared as an advocate for his brother Æchylus, who was strongly accused, and very likely to be condemned to die. Now Amintas having performed great services, and merited highly of the common-wealth, in whose service one of his hands was cut off in the field; he comes into the court in his brother's behalf, and said nothing, but only lifted up his arm, and shewed them *cubitum sine manu*, an arm without a hand, which so moved them, that, without a word speaking, they freed his brother immediately.

And thus if you look into Rev. v. 6. you shall see in what posture Christ is represented, visionally there, as standing between God and us; "And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne, "and the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders stood a Lamb "as it had been slain;" i. e. bearing in his glorified body the marks of death and sacrifice†. Those wounds he received for our sins on earth, are, as it were, still fresh bleeding in heaven: a moving and prevailing argument it is with the Father, to give out the mercies he pleads for.

3. And lastly, *He presents the prayers of his saints to God, with his merits; and desires that they may for his sake be granted.* He causes a cloud of incense to ascend before God with them, Rev. vii. 3. All these were excellently typified out by the going in of the High-priest before the Lord, with the names of the children of Israel on his breast, with the blood of the sacrifice, and his

* *Ælian Hist.* book 5. chap. 19. † Deodati on this place.

Digitized by Google

hands full of incenſe, as the apoſtle explains them in Heb. vii. and Heb. ix.

Thirdly, And that this interceſſion of Chriſt is moſt potent, ſucceſsful, and prevalent with God, will be evinced, both from the qualifications of this our Advocate, from his great intereſt in the Father, from the nature of the place he uſeth with God, and from the relation and intereſt believers have, both in the Father to whom, and the Son by whom this interceſſion is made.

1. Our interceſſor in the heavens is every way able and fit for the work he is engaged in there. Whatever is deſirable in an advocate, is in him eminently. It is neceſſary that he who undertakes to plead the cauſe of another, eſpecially if it be weighty and intricate, ſhould be wiſe, faithful, tender-hearted, and one that concerns himſelf in the ſucceſs of his buſineſs. Our Advocate Chriſt, wants no wiſdom to manage his work; he is the wiſdom of God, yea, *only wiſe*, Jude 25. There is much folly in the beſt of our duties, we know not how to preſs an argument home with God; but Chriſt hath the art of it. Our buſineſs is in a wiſe hand: he is no leſs faithful than wiſe; therefore he is called "a faithful High-prieſt, in things pertaining to God," Heb. ii. 17. He aſſures us we may ſafely truſt our concerns with him, John xiv. 2. "In my Father's houſe are many manſions; if it "were not ſo, I would have told you;" q. d. Do you think I could deceive you? men may cheat you, but I will not; your own hearts may and daily do deceive you, but ſo will not I. And for tender-heartedneſs, and ſenſible feelings for your conditions, there is none like him: Heb. iv. 15. "For we have not an High-"prieſt who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmi-"ties; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without "ſin." We have not one that cannot ſympathize, ſo it is in the Greek*: and on purpoſe that he might the better ſympathize with us, he came as near to our conditions, as the holineſs of his nature could permit. He ſuffered himſelf to be in all points tempted like as we are, ſin only excepted.

And then for his concernment and intereſt in the ſucceſs of his ſuit; he not only reckons, but hath really made it his own intereſt, yea, more his own than it is ours: For now by reaſon of the myſtical union, all our wants and troubles are his, Eph. i. 23. yea, his

* Μη δυναμενος συμπαθησαι. Though he cannot weep or grieve now as he did on earth, yet he can love now as much as ever he loved; and therefore he looks down from heaven upon every particular member; he ſeeth that this man wants this grace, and that man wants that; and the other is in danger of this corruption, or that temptation: and he is daily carrying on the cure. You ſee not your Phyſician, he ſtands out of your ſight; but he ſeeth you, and it is he that doth all for you that is done. *Baxter's treatiſe of converſion.*

Digitized by Google

own glory and completeneſs, as Mediator, is deeply intereſted in it; and therefore we need not doubt but he will uſe all care and diligence in that work. If you ſay, ſo he may, and yet not ſpeed for all that, for it depends upon the Father's grant: True, but then,

2. Conſider the great intereſt he hath in the Father, with whom he intercedes. Chriſt is his dear Son, Col. i. 13. the beloved of his ſoul, Eph. i. 6. Betwixt him and the Father, with whom, when he intercedes, there is an unity, not only of nature, but will; and ſo he always hears him, John xi. 42. Yea, and he ſaid to his dear Son, when he came firſt to heaven, "Aſk of me, and I "will give thee," Pſal. ii. 8. Moreover,

He muſt needs ſpeed in his ſuit, if you conſider the nature of his interceſſion, which is juſt and reaſonable for the matter, urgent and continual, for the manner of it. The matter of his requeſt is moſt equal: what he deſires is not deſired *gratis*, or upon terms unbecoming the holineſs and righteouſneſs of God to grant; he deſires no more but what he has deſerved, and given a valuable conſideration to the Father for. And ſo the juſtice of God doth, not only not oppoſe, but furthers and pleads for the granting and fulfilling his requeſts.

Here you muſt remember, that the Father is under a covenant tie and bond to do what he aſks; for Chriſt having fully performed the work on his part, the mercies he intercedes for, are as due as the hire of the labourer is, when the work is faithfully done. And as the matter is juſt, ſo the manner of his interceſſion is urgent and continual. How importunate a ſuiter he is, may be gathered from that ſpecimen given of it in John xvii. and for the conſtancy of it, my text tells us, "he ever lives to make interceſ- "ſion:" It is his great buſineſs in heaven, and he follows it cloſe. And to cloſe all,

4. Conſider who they are for whom he makes interceſſion: The friends of God, the children of God; thoſe that the Father himſelf loves, and his heart is propenſe and ready enough to grant the beſt and greateſt of mercies to: which is the meaning of John xv. 26, 27. "The Father himſelf loveth you." And it muſt needs be ſo, for the firſt corner ſtone of all theſe mercies was laid by the Father himſelf in his moſt free election. He alſo delivered his Son for us; and "how ſhall he not with him freely give us all "things?" Rom. viii. 32. So then there can remain no doubt upon a conſidering heart, but that Chriſt is a prevalent and ſucceſsful interceſſor in heaven. There only remains one thing more to be ſatisfied, and that is,

Fourthly, In what ſenſe he is to live for ever to make interceſſion. Shall he then be always at his work? employed in begging new favours for us to eternity? How then ſhall the people of God be

Digitized by Google

perfect in heaven, if there be need of Christ's intercession to eternity for them?

I answer, by distinguishing the *essence* and *substance* of Christ's offices, from the *way* and *manner* of administration. In the first sense it is eternal: for his mediatory kingdom, as to the essence of it, is to abide for ever; Christ shall never cease to be a Mediator, the church shall never want a head; for "of his kingdom, there "shall be no end," Luke i. 33. however, Christ, as a Mediator, being employed in a kind of subordinate way, 1 Cor. iii. 23. when he shall have accomplished that design for which he became a Mediator, "Then shall he deliver up the kingdom (in the sense "we spake before) to the Father, and so God shall be all in all," 1 Cor. xv. 24. Then shall the divinity of Christ, which was so emptied and obscured in his undertaking this temporary dispensatory kingdom, be more gloriously manifested, by the full possession, use, and enjoyment of that natural, divine, eternal kingdom, which belongs to all the three co-essential and co-equal persons, reigning with the same power, majesty, and glory, in the unity of the Divine Essence, and common acts, in all, and over all, infinitely and immutably for ever.

And so Christ continues to be our Mediator; and yet that affords no argument that our happiness shall be incomplete, but rather argues the perfection of the church, which thenceforth shall be governed no more as it now is, nor have any farther use of ordinances, but shall be ruled more immediately, gloriously, triumphantly, and ineffably in the world to come. The substance of his Mediatorship is not changed, but the manner of the administration only.

Use 1. Doth Christ live for ever in heaven to present his blood to God in the way of intercession for believers? *How sad then is their case, that have no interest in Christ's blood; but instead of pleading for them, it cries to God against them, as the despisers and abusers of it!* Every unbeliever despises it: The apostate treads it under foot. He that is an intercessor for some, will be an accuser of others. To be guilty of a man's blood is sad; but to have the blood of Jesus accusing and crying to God against a soul, is unspeakably terrible. Surely when he shall make inquisition for blood, when the day of his vengeance is come, he will make it appear by the judgments he will execute, that this is a sin never to be expiated, but vengeance shall pursue the sinner to the bottom of hell. Ah! what do men and women do, in rejecting the gracious offer of Christ! what, tread upon a Saviour! and cast contempt, by unbelief and hardness of heart, upon their only remedy! I remember I have read of a harlot that killed her child, and said that it smiled upon her when she went to stab it. Sinner, doth not Christ smile upon

Digitized by Google

thee in the goſpel? And wilt thou, as it were, ſtab him to the heart by thine infidelity? Wo, and alas for that man, againſt whom this blood cries in heaven!

Uſe 2. Doth Chriſt live for ever to make interceſſion? *Hence let believers fetch relief, and draw encouragement againſt all the cauſes and grounds of their fears and troubles;* for ſurely this anſwers them all.

1. Hence let them be encouraged againſt all their *ſinful infirmities*, and lamented weakneſſes. It is confeſſed theſe are ſad things; they grieve the Spirit of God, ſadden your own hearts, cloud your evidences; but having ſuch a High-prieſt in heaven, can never be your ruin. 1 John ii. 1, 2. "My little children, theſe "things write I unto you, that you ſin not: and if any man ſin, "we have an Advocate with the Father, Jeſus Chriſt the righte-"ous." [My little children.] Children, eſpecially little children, when firſt beginning to take the foot, are apt to ſtumble at every ſtraw; ſo are raw, young and unexperienced Chriſtians: but what if they do? Why though it muſt be far from them to take encouragement ſo to do from Chriſt and his interceſſion, yet if by ſurprizal they do ſin, let them not be utterly diſcouraged: for we have an *Advocate*, he ſtops whatever plea may be brought in againſt us by the Devil, or the law, and anſwers all by his ſatisfaction: he gets out freſh pardons for new ſins. And this Advocate is with [the Father:] he doth not ſay with his Father, though that had been a ſingular ſupport in itſelf, nor yet with our Father, which is a ſweet encouragement ſingly conſidered, but with [the Father] which takes in both, to make the encouragement full. Remember, you that are caſt down, under the ſenſe of ſin, that Jeſus, your friend, in the court above, "is able to "ſave to the uttermoſt." Which is, as * one calls it, a reaching word, and extends itſelf ſo far, that thou canſt not look beyond it. "Let thy ſoul be ſet on the higheſt mount that any creature "was ever ſet on, and enlarged to take in view the moſt ſpacious "proſpect both of ſin and miſery, and difficulties of being ſaved, "that ever yet any poor humble ſoul did caſt within itſelf; yea, "join to theſe all the hindrances and objections that the heart of "man can invent againſt itſelf and ſalvation: lift up thine eyes, "and look to the utmoſt thou canſt ſee; and Chriſt, by his inter-"ceſſion, is able to ſave thee beyond the horizon and utmoſt com-"paſs of thy thoughts, even to *the utmoſt*."

2. Hence draw abundant encouragement *againſt all heart-ſtraitenings, and deadneſs of Spirit in prayer.* Thou complaineſt thy heart is dead, wandering, and contracted in duty: O, but remember Chriſt's blood ſpeaks, when thou canſt not; it can plead for thee,

* Goodwin's Triumph, p. 263.

Digitized by Google

and that powerfully, when thou art not able to speak a word for thyself: to this sense that scripture speaks, Cant. iii. 6. "Who is "this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, per- "fumed with myrrh, and frankincense, with all powders of the "merchant?" The duties of Christians go up many times, as pillars or clouds of smoke from them, more smoke than fire, prayers smoked and sullied with their offensive corruptions; but, remember, Christ perfumes them with myrrh, &c. He, by his intercession, gives them a sweet perfume.

3. Christ's intercession is a singular relief to all that come unto God by him, *against all sinful damps and slavish fears from the justice of God**. Nothing more promotes the fear of reverence; nothing more suppresseth unbelieving despondencies, and destroys the spirit of bondage. So you find it, Heb. x. 19, 20, 21. "Having "therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest, by the "blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath conse- "crated for us through the vail, that is to say, his flesh; and "having a High-priest over the house of God, let us draw near "with a true heart, εν πληροφορια πιστεως, in full assurance of faith:" or let us come unto God, as a ship comes with full sail into the harbour. O what a direct and full gale of encouragement doth this intercession of Christ give to the poor soul that lay a-ground, or was wind-bound before?

4. The intercession of Christ gives admirable satisfaction and encouragement to all that come to God, against the fears of deserting him again by apostasy. This, my friends, this is your principal security against these matters of fear. With this he relieved Peter, Luke xxii. 31, 32. "Simon, (saith Christ) Satan "hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I "have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not," *q. d.* Satan will fan thee, not to get out thy chaff, but bolt out thy flour: his temptations are levelled against thy faith; but fear not, my prayer shall break his designs, and secure thy faith against all his attempts upon it. Upon this powerful intercession of Christ, the apostle builds his triumph against all that threatens to bring him, or any of the saints, again into a state of condemnation. And see how he drives on that triumph, from the resurrection, and session of Christ at the Father's right hand; and especially from the work

* If Jesus be the Mediator of the new covenant, believers may go with boldness, and look the justice of God in the face; for your debt is satisfied. So long as a man is in debt, he steals by the prison door in the dark; but if his surety have paid the debt, he dares come (as you say) and whet his knife at the compter door. Christ, your surety, hath paid the debt; you may go with boldness, and look justice in the face, the Devil and all the serjeants of hell in the face. *Mr W. B. in his treatise of Christ and the covenant, p.* 98.

Digitized by Google

of intercession, which he lives there to perform: Rom. viii. 34, 35. "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died; yea, "rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, "who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us "from the love of Christ?"

5. It gives sweet relief *against the defects and wants that yet are in our sanctification.* We want a great deal of faith, love, heavenly-mindedness, mortification, knowledge. We are short and wanting in all. There are ὑστερήματα, the remains, or things wanting, as the apostle calls them, 1 Thess. iii. 10. Well, if grace be but yet in its weak beginnings, and infancy in thy soul, this may encourage, that by reason of Christ's intercession, it shall live, grow, and expatiate itself in thy heart. He is not only the author, but the finisher of it, Heb. xii. 2. He is ever begging new and fresh mercies for you in heaven; and will never cease till all your wants be supplied. He saves εἰς τὸ παντελὲς, *to the uttermost*, i. e. as I told you before, to the last, perfective, completing act of salvation. So that this is a fountain of relief against all your fears.

Use 3. Doth Christ live for ever to make intercession? *Then let those who reap on earth the fruits of that his work in heaven, draw instruction thence about the following duties, to which it leads them as by the hand.*

1. *Do not forget Christ in an exalted state**. You see though he be in all the glory above, at God's right hand, and enthroned king, he doth not forget you: he, like Joseph, remembers his brethren in all his glory. But, alas, how oft doth advancement make us forget him? As the Lord complains in Hosea xiii. 5, 6. "I did know thee in the wilderness, in the land of great drought: "*but when they came into* Canaan, according to their pastures, so "were they filled; they were filled, and their heart was exalted; "therefore have they forgotten me." As if he had said, O my people, you and I were better acquainted in the wilderness, when you were in a low condition, left to my immediate care, living by daily faith; O then you gave me many a sweet visit; but now you are filled, I hear no more of you. Good had it been for some saints, if they had never known prosperity.

2. *Let the intercession of Christ in heaven for you, encourage you to constancy in the good ways of God.* To this duty it sweetly en-

* He doth not forget us though he be exalted to his glory; for he is not like the poor silly creatures that cannot bear exaltation without being puffed up, and forgetting both themselves, their friends, and their God. No, his exaltation is spiritual and heavenly, perfecting his human nature to the greatest height it is capable of,—he never was more tender of Jerusalem when he wept over it, or of his people when he wept, bled, and died for them, than he is now tender over his in glory. *Mr Baxter's Treatise of Conversion, p.* 184.

Digitized by Google

courages alſo, Heb. iv. 14. " Seeing then that we have a great " High-prieſt that is paſſed into the heavens, Jeſus the ſon of " God, let us hold faſt our profeſſion." Here is encouragement to perſeverance on a double account. One is, that Jeſus, our head, is already in heaven; and if the head be above water, the body cannot drown. The other is from the buſineſs he is there employed about, which is his prieſthood; he is paſſed into the heavens, as our great High-prieſt, to intercede, and therefore we cannot miſcarry.

3. *Let it encourage you to conſtancy in prayer:* O do not neglect that excellent duty, ſeeing Chriſt is there to preſent all your petitions to God; yea, to *perfume* as well as *preſent* them. So the apoſtle, Heb. iv. 16. infers from Chriſt's interceſſion; " Let us " therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may " obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

4. *Hence be encouraged to plead for Chriſt on earth, who continually pleads for you in heaven.* If any accuſe you, he is there to plead for you: and if any diſhonour him on earth, ſee that you plead his intereſt, and defend his honour. Thus you have heard what his interceſſion is, and what benefits we receive by it.

Bleſſed be God for Jeſus Chriſt.

SERMON XIV.

A Vindication of the Satisfaction of Chriſt, as the firſt Effect or Fruit of his Prieſthood.

GAL. iii. 13.

Chriſt hath redeemed us from the curſe of the law, being made a curſe for us.

YOU have ſeen the general nature, neceſſity, and parts of Chriſt's prieſthood, viz. *oblation* and *interceſſion*. Before you part from this office, it is neceſſary you ſhould farther take into conſideration the principal fruits and effects of his prieſthood; which are, complete *ſatisfaction* and the *acquiſition* or purchaſe of an eternal inheritance. The former, viz. The *ſatisfaction* made by his blood, is manifeſtly contained in this excellent ſcripture before us, wherein the apoſtle (having ſhewn before, at ver. 10. that whoſoever " continues not in all things written in the law, to do " them, are curſed)" declares how, notwithſtanding the threats of the law, a believer comes to be freed from the curſe of it, name-

Digitized by Google

ly, by Chriſt's bearing that curſe for him, and ſo ſatisfying God's juſtice, and diſcharging the believer from all obligations to puniſhment.

More particularly, in theſe word's you have the believer's diſcharge from the curſe of the law, and the way and manner thereof opened.

1. The believer's diſcharge; *Chriſt hath redeemed us from the curſe of the law.* The law of God hath three parts, commands, promiſes, and threatenings or curſes. The curſe of the law is its condemning ſentence, whereby a ſinner is bound over to death, even the death of ſoul and body. The chain, by which it binds him, is the guilt of ſin; and from which none can looſe the ſoul but Chriſt. This curſe of the law is the moſt dreadful thing imaginable; it ſtrikes at the life of a ſinner, yea, his beſt life, the eternal life of the ſoul: and when it hath condemned, it is inexorable, no cries nor tears, no reformation nor repentance can looſe the guilty ſinner; for it requires for its reparation that which no mere creature can give, even an infinite ſatisfaction. Now from this curſe Chriſt frees the believer; that is, he diſſolves the obligation to puniſhment, cancels the hand-writing, looſes all the bonds and chains of guilt, ſo that the curſe of the law hath nothing to do with him for ever.

2. We have here the way and manner in and by which this is done; and that is by a full price paid down, and that price paid in the room of the ſinner*, both making up a complete and full *ſatisfaction.* He pays a full price, every way adequate and proportionable to the wrong. So much this word, ημας εξηγορασεν, which we tranſlate redeemed, imports; he hath bought us out, or fully bought us; that is, by a full price. This price with which he ſo fully bought or purchaſed our freedom from the curſe, is not only called λυτρον, Mat. xx. 28. or ranſom, but more emphatically αντιλυτρον, in 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6. which might be tranſlated an adequate or fully anſwerable ranſom. And ſo his freeing us by this price, is not only expreſſed by ηγορασας τω Θεω ημας, "Thou haſt "bought us to God by thy blood," Rev. v. 9. but εξηγορασεν ημας, he hath fully, perfectly, bought us out.

And as the price or ranſom paid was full, perfect, and ſufficient in itſelf; ſo it was paid in our room, and upon our account: ſo ſaith the text, † "By his being made a curſe for us," the meaning is

* As he who is free, redeems a captive by ſubſtituting himſelf in his room, and by putting on the chains, the other puts them off: ſo Chriſt was willing to be obnoxious to the fulfilling of the law that he might acquire immunity to us. *Calv. on Gal.* iv.

† He is ſaid to be made a curſe and to be made ſin: but he is not made the curſe itſelf, to wit, formally, but our curſe was imputed to him. *Cyril.*

Digitized by Google

not, that Christ was made the very curse itself, changed into a curse; no more than when the word is said to be made flesh, the divine nature was converted into flesh, but it assumed or took flesh; and so Christ took the curse upon himself; therefore it is said, 2 Cor. v. 21. "He was made sin for us who knew no sin;" that is, our sin was imputed to our surety, and laid upon him for satisfaction. And so this word ὑπερ [for] implies a substitution of one, in the place and stead of another. Now the price being full, and paid in lieu of our sins, and thereupon we fully redeemed or delivered from the curse, it follows, as a fair and just deduction, that,

Doct. *The death of Christ hath made a full satisfaction to God for all the sins of his elect.*

"He (to wit our surety, Christ) was oppressed, and he was af-"flicted," saith the prophet, Isa. lii. 7. it may be fitly rendered, (and the words will bear it without the least force) *it was exacted, and answered.* But how, being either way translated, it establisheth the satisfaction of Christ, may be seen in our learned Annotations on that place. So Col. i. 14. "In whom we have απολυτρωσιν "δια του αιματος redemption through his blood, even the forgiven-"ness of sin." Here we have the benefit, viz. redemption interpreted by way of opposition, "even the remission of sins;" and the matchless price that was laid down to purchase it, the blood of Christ. So again, Heb. ix. 12. "By his own blood he entered "once into the holy place, having obtained αιωναν λυτρωσιν, eternal "redemption for us." Here is eternal redemption, the mercy purchased; his own blood, the price that procured it.

Now forasmuch as this doctrine of Christ's satisfaction is so necessary, weighty, and comfortable in itself, and yet so much opposed and intricated by several enemies to it; the method I shall take for the clearing, establishing, and preparing it for use, shall be,

First, To open the *nature* of Christ's satisfaction, and shew what it is.

Secondly, To establish the truth of it, and prove that he made full satisfaction to God for all the sins of the elect.

Thirdly, To answer the most considerable objections made against it.

And lastly, To *apply* it.

First, What is the satisfaction of Christ, and what doth it imply? I answer, *satisfaction is the act of Christ, God-man, presenting himself as our surety in obedience to God, and love to us; to do and to suffer all that the*

What divine satisfaction is.

Digitized by Google

law required of us; thereby freeing us from the wrath and curse due to us for sins.

1. It is the act of God-man*; no other was capable of giving satisfaction for an infinite wrong done to God. But by reason of the union of the two natures in his wonderful person, he could do it, and hath done it for us. The human nature did what was necessary in its kind; it gave the matter of the sacrifice: the divine nature stampt the dignity and value upon it, which made it an adequate compensation: so that it was *opus θεανδρικον*, the act of God-man; yet so, that each nature retained its own properties, notwithstanding their joint influence into the effect. If the angels in heaven had laid down their lives, or if the blood of all the men in the world had been poured out by justice, this could never have satisfied; because that *αξιωσις*, worth and value which this sacrifice hath, would have still been wanting. "It was God that re-"deemed the church with his own blood," Acts xx. 18. If God redeem with his own blood, he redeems as God-man, without any dispute.

2. If he satisfy God for us, he must present himself before God, as our surety, in our stead, as well as for our good; else his obedience had signified nothing to us; to this end he was "made under the law," Gal. iv. 4. comes under the same obligation with us, and that as a surety, for so he is called, Heb. vii. 22. Indeed his obedience and sufferings could be exacted from him upon no other account. It was not for any thing he had done that he became a curse. It was prophesied of him, Dan. ix. 26. "The Messiah shall be cut off, but not for himself:" and being dead, the scriptures plainly assert it was *for our sins*, and upon our account: so 1 Cor. xv. 3. "Christ died for our sins, ac-"cording to the scriptures."

And it is well observed by our divines, who assert the vicegerency and substitution of Christ in his sufferings, that all those Greek particles which we translate [for] when applied to the sufferings of Christ, do note the meritorious, deserving, procuring cause of those sufferings. So you find, Heb. x. 12. "He offered "one sacrifice *υπερ αμαρτιων*, for sins." 1 Pet. iii. 18. "Christ "once suffered, *περι* for sins." Rom. iv. 25. "He was deliver-"ed, *δια*, for our offences," Mat. xv. 28. "He gave his life a "ransom, *αντι*, for many." And there are that confidently affirm this last particle is never used in any other sense in the whole

* This satisfaction had in it sufficient and in some respect infinite value. 1. In respect of the person offering it, who was God. 2. In respect of what he offered; for he offered himself, God and man. 3. In respect of the manner of offering, in which there was a certain divine perfection in regard of the hypostatical (or personal union). *Amef. medul. p.* 98.

Digitized by Google

book of God: as "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth," i. e. one in lieu of another. Just as those whom the Greeks called ἀντίψυχοι, men that exchanged their lives, or gave life for life, staking down their own to deliver another's, as Philumene did for Aristides. And so the poet Virgil speaks;

Si fratrem Pollux alterna morte redemit.

And indeed, this very consideration is that which supports the doctrine of imputation, the imputation of our sins to Christ, and the imputation of Christ's righteousness unto us, Rom. v. 19. For how could our sins be laid on him, but as he stood in our stead? or his righteousness be imputed to us, but as he was our surety, performing it in our place *; so that to deny Christ's sufferings in our stead, is to lose the corner-stone of our justification, and overthrow the very pillar which supports our faith, comfort and salvation. Indeed if this had not been, he would have been the righteous Lord, but not the *Lord our righteousness*, as he is stiled, Jer. xxxiii. 16. So that it was but a vain distinction, to say it was *for our good*, but not *in our stead*: for had he not been in our stead, we could not have had the good of it.

3. The internal moving cause of Christ's satisfaction for us, was his obedience to God, and love to us. That it was an act of obedience, is plain from Phil. ii. 8. "He became obedient unto "death, even the death of the cross." Now obedience respects a command, and such a command Christ received to die for us, as himself tells us, John x. 18. "I lay down my life of myself; I "have power to lay it down, and power to take it again: this "commandment have I received of my Father." So that it was an act of obedience with respect to God, and yet a most free and spontaneous act with respect to himself. And that he was moved to it out of pity and love to us, himself assures us: Gal. v. 2. "Christ loved us, and gave himself for us an offering and a sacri-"fice to God." Upon this Paul sweetly reflected, Gal. ii. 20, "Who loved me, and gave himself for me." As the external moving cause was our misery, so the internal was his own love and pity for us.

4. The matter of Christ's satisfaction, was his active and passive obedience to all the law of God required†. I know there are some that doubt whether Christ's active obedience have any place

* This special imputation is the admission of the merit of another instead of that which ought to be in the criminal himself. *Bradshaw on Just. p.* 47.

† For if through Christ's passive obedience alone imputed, we are accounted free from all the guilt, of the sins of every one of us of whatever kind, whether of commission or omission; to what purpose should the active obedience of the same person be farther imputed for justification. *Bradshaw in epist. lib. de Justif.*

Digitized by Google

here, and ſo whether it be imputed as any part of our righteouſneſs. It is confeſſed, that ſcripture moſt frequently mentions his paſſive obedience, as that which made the atonement, and procures our redemption, Matth. xx. 28. and xxvi. 28. Rom. iii. 24, 25. and elſewhere: but his paſſive obedience is never mentioned excluſively, as the ſole cauſe, or matter of ſatisfaction. But in thoſe places where it is mentioned by itſelf, it is put for his whole obedience, both active and paſſive, by an uſual trope; and in other ſcriptures it is aſcribed to both, as Gal. iv. 4. he is ſaid, "to be "under the law, to redeem them that were under the law." Now his being "made under the law" to this end, cannot be reſtrained to his ſubjection to the curſe of the law only, but to the commands of it alſo. So Rom. v. 19. "As by one man's diſobedience, "many were made ſinners; ſo by the obedience of one, ſhall "many be made righteous." It were a manifeſt injury to this text alſo, to reſtrain it to the * paſſive obedience of Chriſt only. To be ſhort, this twofold obedience of Chriſt, ſtands oppoſed to a twofold obligation that fallen man is under; the one *to do* what God requires, the other *to ſuffer* what he hath threatened for diſobedience. We owe him active obedience as his *creatures*, and paſſive obedience as his *priſoners*. Suitably to his double obligation, Chriſt comes under the *commandment* of the law, to fulfil it actively, Matth. iii. 15. and under the *malediction* of the law, to ſatisfy it paſſively. And whereas it is objected by ſome, if he fulfilled the whole law for us by his active, what need then of his paſſive obedience? We reply, great need; becauſe both theſe make up that one, entire, and complete obedience, by which God is ſatisfied, and we juſtified. It is a good rule of Alſted, *obedientia Chriſti eſt una copulativa;* the whole obedience of Chriſt, both active and paſſive, make up one intire perfect obedience; and therefore there is no reaſon why one particle, either of the one, or of the other, ſhould be excluded.

5. The effect and fruit of this his ſatisfaction, is our freedom, ranſom, or deliverance from the wrath and curſe due to us for our ſins. Such was the dignity, value, and completeneſs of Chriſt's ſatisfaction†, that in ſtrict juſtice it merited our redemption and full deliverance; not only a poſſibility that we might be redeemed and pardoned, but a right whereby to be ſo, as the learned Dr Twiſs judiciouſly argues. If he be made a curſe for us, we muſt

* There is a twofold obedience of Chriſt, anſwering man's twofold obligation ſince the fall: the active for the fault committed; the paſſive for the penalty incurred, or both the former anſwering for both the latter. *Trel. as above.*

† Chriſt acquired a right to give forgiveneſs of ſins; but not ſuch a right by which merely *they may* be forgiven, but ſuch that, *in juſtice they ought* to be all forgiven to thoſe for whom ſatisfaction is made by his death. *See Twiſſ de permiſſ. lib.* 2.

Digitized by Google

then be redeemed from the curſe, according to juſtice; ſo the apoſtle argues, Rom. iii. 25, 26. "Whom God hath ſet forth to "be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his "righteouſneſs for the remiſſion of ſins that are paſt, through the "forbearance of God; to declare, I ſay, at this time, his righte-"ouſneſs, that God might be juſt, and the juſtifier of him that "believeth in Jeſus." Mark the deſign and end of God in exacting ſatisfaction from Chriſt, it was to declare his righteouſneſs in the remiſſion of ſin to believers; and leſt we ſhould loſe the emphatical word, he doubles it, *to declare, I ſay, his righteouſneſs.* Every one can ſee how his mercy is declared in remiſſion: but he would have us take notice, that his juſtification of believers is an act of juſtice; and that God, as he is a juſt God, cannot condemn the believer, ſince Chriſt hath ſatisfied his debts. This attribute ſeems to be the main bar againſt remiſſion; but now it is become the very ground and reaſon why God remits. O how comfortable a text is this! Doth Satan or conſcience ſet forth thy ſin in all its diſcouraging circumſtances and aggravations? God hath ſet forth Chriſt to be a propitiation. Muſt juſtice be manifeſted, ſatisfied and glorified? So it is in the death of Chriſt, ten thouſand times more than ever it could in thy damnation. Thus you have a brief account of the ſatisfaction made by Jeſus Chriſt.

Secondly, We ſhall gather up all that hath been ſaid to eſtabliſh the truth of Chriſt's ſatisfaction; proving the reality of it, that it is not an improper, catachreſtical, fictitious ſatisfaction, by divine acceptilation, as ſome have very diminutively called it; but real, proper, and full, and as ſuch accepted by God. For his blood is the blood of a *Surety*, Heb. vii. 22. who came under the ſame obligations of the law with us, Gal. iv. 4. and though he had no ſin of his own, yet ſtanding before God as our Surety, the iniquities of us all were laid upon him, Iſa. liii. 6. and from him did the Lord, with great ſeverity, exact ſatisfaction for our ſins, Rom. viii. 32. puniſh them upon his ſoul, Matth. xxvii. 46. and upon his body, Acts ii. 23. and with this obedience of his Son, is fully pleaſed and ſatisfied, Eph. v. 2. and hath in token thereof raiſed him from the dead, and ſet him at his own right hand, 1 Tim. iii. 16. and for his righteouſneſs-ſake acquitted and diſcharged believers, who ſhall never more come into condemnation, Rom. viii. 1, 34. All this is plain in ſcripture; and our faith in the ſatisfaction of Chriſt, is not built on the wiſdom of man, but the everlaſting ſealed truth of God: yet ſuch is the perverſe nature of man, and the pride of his heart, that whilſt he ſhould be humbly adoring the grace of God, in providing ſuch a Surety for us, he is found accuſing the juſtice, and diminiſhing the mercy of God, and raiſing all the objections which Satan and his own heart can invent, to overturn

Digitized by Google

that bleſſed foundation upon which God hath built up his own honour, and his people's ſalvation.

Thirdly, In the next place, therefore, we ſhall reject thoſe doctrines, and remove the principal of thoſe objections that are found militating againſt the ſatisfaction of Chriſt.

And, in the firſt place, we reject with deep abhorrence that doctrine, which aſcribes to man any power, in whole, or in part, to ſatisfy God for his own, or other men's ſins. This, no mere creature can do by active obedience, were it ſo complete that he could never ſin in thought, word, or deed, any more, but live the moſt holy life that ever any lived: for all this would be no more than his duty as a creature, Luke xvii. 10. and ſo can be no ſatisfaction for what he is by nature, or hath done againſt God as a ſinner. Nor yet by ſuffering; for we have offended an infinite God, and can never ſatisfy him by our finite ſufferings.

We alſo, with like deteſtation, reject that doctrine which makes the ſatisfaction of Chriſt either impoſſible, or fictitious, and inconſiſtent with grace, in the free pardon of ſin. Many are the cavils raiſed againſt Chriſt's ſatisfaction; the principal are ſuch as theſe that follow:

Object. *The doctrine of Chriſt's ſatisfaction is abſurd, for Chriſt* (ſay we) *is God; if ſo then, God ſatisfies himſelf, than which what can be more abſurd to imagine?*

Sol. I anſwer, God cannot properly be ſaid to ſatisfy himſelf; for that would be the ſame thing as to pardon, ſimply, without any ſatisfaction. But there is a twofold conſideration of Chriſt;* one in reſpect of his Eſſence and Divine Nature, in which ſenſe he is the object both of the offence, and of the ſatisfaction made for it. Another in reſpect of his perſon and œconomy, or office; in which ſenſe he properly ſatisfies God, being in reſpect of his manhood another, and inferior to God, John xiv. 28. The blood of the man Chriſt Jeſus is the matter of the ſatisfaction; the Divine Nature dignifies it, and makes it of infinite value†. A certain family hath committed treaſon againſt the king, and are all under the condemnation of the law for it; the king's ſon moved with pity and love, reſolves to ſatisfy the law, and yet ſave the family; in order whereunto he marries a daughter of the family, whereby her blood becomes royal blood, and worth the blood of the whole family whence ſhe ſprang; this princeſs is by her huſ-

* It is one thing to treat of Chriſt's divinity according to its nature, conſidered diſtinctly by itſelf: another thing to treat of it as in his perſon. *Trelcat.*

† Chriſt, according to his divine nature, is one with God; as man he is one with us: on the other part, as God, he is at a diſtance from us: as man, or by voluntary œconomy, at a diſtance from God. *Idem ibid. See Daven. on Col.* 103. *and Cameron. p.* 361.

Digitized by Google

band executed in the room of the reſt. In this caſe the king ſatisfies not himſelf for the wrong, but is ſatisfied by the death of another, equivalent in worth to the blood of them all. This ſimilitude anſwers not to all the particulars, as indeed nothing in nature doth, or can; but it only ſhews what it was that ſatisfied God, and how it became ſo ſatisfactory.

Object. *If Chriſt ſatisfied by paying our debt, then he ſhould have endured eternal torments; for ſo we ſhould, and the damned ſhall.*

Sol. We muſt diſtinguiſh betwixt what is *eſſential*, and what is *accidental* in puniſhment. The primary intent of the law is reparation and ſatisfaction; he that can make it at one intire payment (as Chriſt could and did) ought to be diſcharged. He that cannot (as no mere creature can) ought to lie for ever, as the damned do, under ſufferings.

Object. *If God will be ſatisfied for our ſins before he pardon them, how then is pardon an act of grace?*

Sol. Pardon could not be an act of pure grace, if God received ſatisfaction from us; but if he pardon us upon the ſatisfaction received from Chriſt, though it be of debt to him, it is of grace to us: for it was grace to admit a Surety to ſatisfy, more grace to provide him, and moſt of all to apply his ſatisfaction to us, by uniting us to Chriſt, as he hath done.

Object. *But God loved us before Chriſt died for us; for it was the love of God to the world that moved him to give his only-begotten Son. Could God love us, and yet not be reconciled and ſatisfied?*

Sol. God's *complacent love* is indeed inconſiſtent with an unreconciled ſtate: He is reconciled to every one he ſo loves. But his *benevolent love*, conſiſting in his purpoſe of good, may be before actual reconciliation and ſatisfaction.

Object. *Temporal death, as well as eternal, is a part of the curſe, if Chriſt have fully ſatisfied by bearing the curſe for us, how is it, that thoſe for whom he bare it, die as well as others?*

Sol. As temporal death is a *penal evil*, and part of the curſe, ſo God inflicts it not upon believers; but they muſt die for other ends, viz. to be made perfectly happy in a more full and immediate enjoyment of God, than they can have in the body: and ſo, *death is theirs* by way of privilege, 1 Cor. iii. 22. *They are not death's* by way of puniſhment. The ſame may be ſaid of all the afflictions with which God, for gracious ends, now exerciſes his reconciled ones. Thus much may ſuffice to eſtabliſh this great truth.

Inference 1. If the death of Chriſt was that which ſatisfied God for all the ſins of the elect, *then certainly there is an infinite evil in ſin, ſince it cannot be expiated, but by an infinite ſatisfaction.* Fools make a mock at ſin, and there are but few ſouls in the world that are duly ſenſible of, and affected with its evil; but certainly, if God

Digitized by Google

ſhould damn thee to all eternity, thy eternal ſufferings could not ſatisfy for the evil that is in one vain thought.* It may be you may think this is harſh and ſevere, that God ſhould hold his creatures under everlaſting ſufferings for ſin, and never be ſatisfied with them any more. But when you have well conſidered, that the object againſt whom you ſin, is the infinite bleſſed God, which derives an infinite evil to the ſin committed againſt him; and when you conſider how God dealt with the angels that fell, for one ſin, and that but of the mind; (for having no bodily organs, they could commit nothing externally againſt God:) you will alter your minds about it. O the depth of the evil of ſin! If ever you will ſee how great and horrid an evil ſin is, meaſure it in your thoughts, either by the infinite holineſs and excellency of God, who is wrong'd by it; or by the infinite ſufferings of Chriſt, who died to ſatisfy for it; and then you will have deeper apprehenſions of the evil of ſin.

Inf. 2. If the death of Chriſt ſatisfied God, and thereby redeemed the elect from the curſe: *then the redemption of ſouls is coſtly;* ſouls are dear things, and of great value with God. "Ye "know, (ſays the apoſtle,) that ye were not redeemed with cor-"ruptible things, as ſilver and gold, from your vain converſation, "received by tradition; but with the precious blood of the Son of "God, as of a lamb without ſpot," 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. Only the blood of God is found an equivalent price for the redemption of ſouls. Gold and ſilver may redeem from Turkiſh, but not from helliſh bondage. The whole creation ſold to the utmoſt worth of it, is not a value for the redemption of one ſoul. Souls are very dear; he that paid for them found them ſo: yet how cheaply do ſinners ſell their ſouls, as if they were but low priced commodities! but you that ſell your ſouls cheap, will buy repentance dear.

Inf. 3. If Chriſt's death ſatisfied God for our ſins, *how unparalleled is the love of Chriſt to poor ſinners!* It is much to pay a pecuniary debt to free another, but who will pay his own blood for another? We have a noted inſtance of †Zaleucus, that famous Locrenſian lawgiver, who decreed, that whoever was convicted of adultery, ſhould have both his eyes put out. It ſo fell out, that his own Son was brought before him for that crime: hereupon the

* By this death of Chriſt we are greatly excited both to caution, and to deteſtation of ſin. For it muſt ſurely be a deadly evil which could not be otherwiſe cured than by Chriſt's death. What man therefore, ſeriouſly conſidering that his ſins were no other way expiated than by the blood of the very Son of God, will not tremble at the thoughts of trampling, as it were, on that moſt precious blood by daily ſinning? *Dawen.* on Col. chap. i. ver. 20.

† Valerius, book vi. chap. 5.

Digitized by Google

people interposing, made suit for his pardon. At length the father, partly overcome by their importunities, and not unwilling to shew what lawful favour he might to his son, he first put out one of his own eyes, and then one of his son's; and so shewed himself both a merciful father, and a just lawgiver; so tempering mercy with justice, that both the law was satisfied, and his son spared. This is written by the Historian as an instance of singular love in his father, to pay one half of the penalty for his son. But Christ did not divide, and share in the penalty with us, but bare it all: Zaleucus did it for his son, who was dear to him; Christ did it for enemies, that were fighting and rebelling against him: Rom. v. 8. "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." "O "would to God (said a holy one) I could cause paper and ink to "speak the worth and excellency, the high and loud praises of our "Brother ransomer! O the ransomer needs not my report; but "O if he would take it, and make use of it! I should be happy "if I had an errand to this world but for some few years, to spread "proclamations, and out-cries, and love-letters of the highness "[the highness evermore] of the ransomer, whose clothes were "wet, and dyed in blood; howbeit, that after that, my soul and "body should go back to their mother nothing."

Inf. 4. If Christ, by dying, hath made full satisfaction, *then God is no loser in pardoning the greatest of sinners that believe in Jesus; and consequently his justice can be no bar to their justification and salvation.* He is just to forgive us our sins, 1 John i. 9. What an argument is here for a poor believer to plead with God! Lord, if thou save me by Jesus Christ, thy justice will be fully satisfied at one full payment; but if thou damn me, and require satisfaction at my hands, thou canst never receive it: I shall make but a dribbling payment, though I lie in hell to eternity, and shall still be infinitely behind with thee. Is it not more for thy glory to receive it from Christ's hand, than to require it at mine? One drop of his blood is more worth than all my polluted blood. O how satisfying a thing is this to the conscience of a poor sinner that is objecting the multitude, aggravations, and amazing circumstances, of his sins, against the possibility of their being pardoned! Can such a sinner as I be forgiven? Yes, if thou believest in Jesus, thou mayest; for so God will lose nothing in pardoning the greatest transgressors: "Let Israel hope in the Lord; for with the Lord there "is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption," Psal. cxxx. 7. i. e. a large stock of merit lying by him in the blood of Christ, to pay him for all that you have done against him.

Inf. 5. Lastly, If Christ hath made such a full satisfaction as you have heard, *How much is it the concernment of every soul, to abandon all thoughts of satisfying God for his own sins, and betake himself to the*

Digitized by Google

blood of Christ, the ransomer, by faith, that in that blood they may be pardoned? It would grieve one's heart to see how many poor creatures are drudging and tugging at a task of repentance, and revenge upon themselves, and reformation, and obedience, to satisfy God for what they have done against him: And alas! it cannot be, they do but lose their labour; could they swelter their very hearts out, weep till they can weep no more, cry till their throats be parched, alas, they can never recompence God for one vain thought; for such is the severity of the law, that when it is once offended, it will never be made amends again by all that we can do; it will not discharge the sinner, for all the sorrow in the world. Indeed, if a man be in Christ, sorrow for sin is something, and renewed obedience is something; God looks upon them favourably, and accepts them graciously in Christ: but out of him they signify no more than the intreaties and cries of a condemned malefactor, to reverse the legal sentence of the judge. You may toil all the days of your life, and at night go to bed without a candle. To that sense that scripture sounds, Isa. l. 11. "Behold, all ye "that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks; "walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that you have "kindled: This shall ye have of mine hand, ye shall lie down in "sorrow. By *fire*, and the light of it, some understand the sparkling pleasures of this life, and the sensitive joys of the creatures: but generally it is taken for our own natural righteousness, and all acts of duties, in order to our justification by them before God. And so it stands apposed to that faith of recumbency spoken of in the verse before. By their *compassing themselves about with these sparks*, understand their dependance on these their duties, and glorying in them. But see the fatal issue, *Ye shall lie down in sorrow*, that shall be your recompence from the hand of the Lord; that is all the thanks and reward you must expect from him, for slighting Christ's, and preferring your own righteousness before his. Reader, be convinced, that one act of faith in the Lord Jesus pleases God more than all the obedience, repentance, and strivings to obey the law, through thy whole life, can do. And thus you have the first special fruits of Christ's priesthood, in the full satisfaction of God, for all the sins of believers.

Digitized by Google

SERMON XV.

Of the bleſſed Inheritance purchaſed by the Oblation of Chriſt, being the ſecond Effect or Fruit of his Prieſthood.

GAL. iv. 4, 5.

But when the fulneſs of time was come, God ſent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of ſons.

THIS ſcripture gives us an account of a double fruit of Chriſt's death, viz. the payment of our debt, and the purchaſe of our inheritance.

1. The payment of our debt, expreſſed by our redemption, or buying us out from the obligation and curſe of the law, which hath been diſcourſed in the laſt exerciſe.

2. The purchaſe of an inheritance for thoſe redeemed ones, expreſſed here by their receiving the adoption of ſons; which is to be our preſent ſubject. *Adoption* is either *civil*, or *divine*. Of the firſt, the civil law gives this definition: that it is,

"* A lawful act, an imitation of nature, invented for the com-
"fort of them that have no children of their own. Divine adop-
"tion is that ſpecial benefit whereby God, for Chriſt's ſake, ac-
"cepteth us as ſons, and makes us heirs of eternal life with him."

† Betwixt this civil and ſacred adoption, there is a twofold agreement, and diſagreement. They agree in this, that both flow from the pleaſure and good-will of the adoptant; and in this, that both confer a right to privileges, which we have not by nature: but in this they differ, one is an act imitating nature, the other tranſcends nature; the one was found out for the comfort of them that had no children; the other for the comfort of them that had no father. This divine adoption is, in ſcripture, either taken properly for that act or ſentence of God, by which we are made ſons, or for the privileges with which the adopted are inveſted: and ſo it is taken Rom. viii. 23. and in this ſcripture now before us. We loſt our inheritance by the fall of Adam; we receive it, as the text ſpeaks, by the death of Chriſt, which reſtores it again to us by a new and better title. The doctrine hence, is this,

---

* *Adoptio eſt actus legitimus, imitans naturam, repertus ad eorum ſolatium, qui liberos non habent. Adoptio eſt beneficium, quo nos Deus propter Chriſtum in filios recipit, et facit nos cum ipſo hæredes vitæ æternæ.* Ravanel.

† Here therefore adoption is taken (as redemption is in Rom. iii. 23.) for actual poſſeſſion. For as, at the laſt day, we will perceive the fruit of our redemption, ſo now we perceive, &c. *Calvin on this place.*

Digitized by Google

Doct. *That the death of Jesus Christ hath not only satisfied for our debts, but over and above purchased a rich inheritance for the children of God.*

" For this end, or cause, he is the Mediator of the New Testa-
" ment; that, by means of death, for the redemption of the
" transgressions that were under the first Testament, they which
" are called, might receive the promise of the eternal inheritance," Heb. ix. 15.

We will here, *First*, See what Christ paid. *Secondly*, What he purchased. *Thirdly*, For whom.

First, What Christ paid. Our * divines comprise the virtue and fruits of the priesthood of Christ in these two things, viz. *Solutio debiti, et acquisitio hæreditatis*, payment and purchase. Answerably, the obedience of Christ hath a double relation, *relatio legalis justitiæ*, the relation of a legal righteousness; and adequate and exactly proportioned price. And it hath also in it *ratio superlegalis meriti*, the relation of a merit over and beyond the law.

To object (as some do) " † the satisfaction of Christ was more
" than sufficient," according to our doctrine, " and therefore
" could not be intended for the payment of our debt," is a senseless cavil. For surely, if Christ paid more than was owing, he must needs pay all that was owing to divine Justice. And truly it is but a bad requital of the love of Jesus Christ, who, beside the payment of what he owed, would manifest his bounty by the redundancy of his merit, which he paid to God to purchase a blessed inheritance for us. This overplus of satisfaction (which was the price of that inheritance I am now to open) is not obscurely hinted, but plainly expressed twice in Rom. v. 15. " But not as the
" offence, so also is the free gift: for if through the offence of
" one many be dead, πολλῷ μᾶλλον, much more the grace of God,
" and the gift of grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ,
" περισσεύσει, hath abounded or flowed abundantly unto many." So ver. 17. " For if by one man's offence, death reigned by one
" πολλῷ μᾶλλον, much more they which receive τὴν περισσείαν, the
" overflowings, or abundance of grace, and of the gift of righte-
" ousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." In both ‡ which places Christ and Adam are compared as the two roots or common heads of mankind, both agreeing in this property of communicating their conditions to those that are theirs; yet there

* Parker de descensu l. 3. p. 79. Dr Reynolds on Psal. cx. Cameron, p. 363, &c.

† *Satisfactio Christi fuit plus quam sufficiens, non igitur, ex debito, non ex obligato.* Feward. dialog. 5. p. 382.

‡ Dutch Annotations on this place. Deodat. on this place.

Digitized by Google

is a great deal of difference betwixt them; for in Christ the power is all divine, and therefore infinitely more active and effectual: He communicates abundantly more to his, than they lost in Adam; so that his blood is not only sufficient to redeem all those that are actually redeemed by it, but even the whole world also. And were there so many worlds of men as there are men in the world, it would be sufficient for them also; and yet still there would be an overplus of value: for all those worlds of men would rise but to a finite bulk; but this blood is infinite in its worth and dignity. Since then there is not a whole world, no, not half, but the far less part redeemed by the blood of Christ, which was sufficient for so many; great must be the surplusage and redundancy of merit? Here our divines rightly distinguish betwixt the *substance* and *accidents* of Christ's death and obedience. Consider Christ's suffering, as to the substance of it, it was no more than what the * law required; for, neither the justice, nor love of the Father would permit that Christ should suffer more than what was necessary for him to bear, as our Surety; but, as to the circumstances, the person of the sufferer, the cause and efficacy of his sufferings, *&c.* it was much more than sufficient: a *superlegale meritum*, a merit above and beyond what the law required; for, though the law required the death of the sinner, who is but a poor contemptible creature, it did not require that one, perfectly innocent, should die; it did not require that God should shed his blood; it did not require blood of such value and worth as this was. I say, none of this the law required, though God was pleased, for the advancement and manifestation of his justice and mercy in the highest, to admit, and order this, by way of commutation, admitting him to be our ἀντίψυχος, or ransomer, by dying for us. And, indeed, it was a most gracious relaxation of the law †, that admitted of such a commutation as this; for hereby it comes to pass, that justice is fully satisfied, and yet we live and are saved; which, before, was a thing that could not be imagined. Yea, now we are not only redeemed from wrath, by the adequate compensation made for our sins by Christ's blood and sufferings, substantially considered; but entitled to a most glorious inheritance, purchased by his blood, considered as the blood of an innocent, as the blood of God, and therefore as most excellent and efficacious blood, above what the law demanded. And this

* *Quoad substantiam pœnæ nihil plus perpessus est Christus quam quod per legem debebatur; quoad circumstantias autem, patientis personam, patiendi causam, passionis efficaciam, plus quam sufficiens satisfactio Christi a nobis dicitur.* Parker de descensu, l. 8.

† They who have written of the relaxation of laws, observe, that these are the best relaxations to which is annexed commutation [or compensation]. *Grotius on satisfaction, chap. 5.*

Digitized by Google

is the meaning of Athanasius, when he saith, "* That Christ re-"compensed, or made amends for small things with great:" he means not, that sin, considered absolutely, and in itself, is small; O no, but compared with Christ's blood, and the infinite excellency and worth of it, it is so. And † Chrysostom, to the same purpose, "Christ paid much more (saith he) than we owed, and "so much more, as the immense ocean is more than a small drop." So that it was rightly determined by holy Anselm: "No man "(saith he) can pay to God what he owes him; Christ only paid "more than he owed him." By this you see, how rich a treasure lies in Christ, to bestow in a purchase for us, above what he paid to redeem us; even as much as his soul and body were more worth than ours, for whom it was sacrificed; which is so great a sum, that all the angels in heaven, and men on earth, can never compute and sum up, so as to shew us the total of it. And this was that inexhaustible treasure that Christ expended, to procure and purchase the fairest inheritance for believers. Having seen the treasure that purchased, let us next enquire into the inheritance purchased by it.

Secondly, This inheritance is so large, that it cannot be surveyed by creatures; nor can the boundaries and limits thereof be described, for it comprehends all things; 1 Cor. iii. 22‡. "All is "yours, ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." Rev. xxi. 7. "He that overcomes shall inherit all things." And yet I do not think, or say, that *Dominium fundatur in gratia*, that temporal dominion is founded in grace: no, that is at the cast and disposal of Providence. But Christ, by his death, hath restored a right to all things to his people.

But, to be more particular, I shall distribute the saints inheritance, purchased by Christ, into three heads; all *temporal* good things, all *spiritual* good things, and all *eternal* good things are theirs.

1. *All temporal good things.* 1 Tim. vi. 7. "He hath given us "all things richly to enjoy §." Not that they have the *possession*, but the comfort and *benefit* of all things: others have the sting, gall, wormwood, baits and snares of the creature; saints only have the blessing and comfort of it. So that this little that a

* *Christum parva magnis pensasse.* Athanas. de passione et cruce.

† *Multo plura quam debemus Christus pro nobis solvit, tantoque plura, quanto guttulam exiguam pelagus excelliit immensum.*

‡ The whole world belongs to the faithful. *Aug.*

§ Christ merited for us all supernatural good things, and all aids, whether preventing, or subsequent: and all those things, though they are things extrinsical to us, which bear the relation of means to our salvation. *Vincent. Austricens. de habit. Christ. grat. prælect. q. 5. p. 259.*

Digitized by Google

righteous man hath, is (in this among other reſpects) *better than the treaſures of many wicked:* which is the true key to open that dark ſaying of the apoſtle, 2 Cor. vi. 10. "As having nothing, and "yet poſſeſſing all things." They only poſſeſs, others are poſſeſſed by the world. The ſaints *utuntur mundo, et fruuntur Deo*, "uſe "the world, and enjoy God" in the uſe of it. Others are deceived, defiled, and deſtroyed by the world; but theſe are refreſhed and furthered by it.

2. *All ſpiritual good things* are purchaſed by the blood of Chriſt for them; as *Juſtification*, which comprizes remiſſion of ſins and acceptance of our perſons by God: Rom. iii. 24. "Being juſtified "freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Chriſt." *Sanctification* is alſo purchaſed for them; yea, both *initial* and *progreſſive* ſanctification: for of "God, he is made unto us, not only "wiſdom and righteouſneſs, but ſanctification alſo," 1 Cor. i. 30. Theſe two, viz. our juſtification and ſanctification, are two of the moſt rich and ſhining robes in the wardrobe of free-grace. How glorious and lovely do they render the ſoul that wears them! Theſe are like the bracelets, and jewels Iſaac ſent to Rebecca. Adoption into the family of God is purchaſed for us by his blood; "For ye "are all the children of God by faith in Jeſus Chriſt," Gal. iii. 26. Chriſt, as he is the Son, is *hæres natus*, "the heir by nature;" as he is *Mediator*, he is *hæres conſtitutus*, "the heir by appointment," *appointed heir of all things*, as it is, Heb. i. 2. By the Sonſhip of Chriſt, we being united to him by faith, become ſons; and if ſons, then heirs. "O what manner of love is this, that we ſhould be "called the ſons of God!" 1 John iii. 1. That a poor beggar ſhould be made an heir, yea, an heir of God, and joint heir with Chriſt! Yea, that very faith, which is the bond of union, and conſequently, the ground of all our communion with Chriſt, is the purchaſe of his blood alſo: 2 Pet. i. 1. "To them that have "obtained like precious faith with us, through the righteouſneſs "of God, and our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt." This moſt precious *grace* is the dear purchaſe of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; yea, all that *peace*, *joy*, and *ſpiritual comfort*, which are ſweet fruits of faith, are with it purchaſed for us by this blood.

So ſpeaks the apoſtle in Rom. v. 1, 2, 3. "Being juſtified by "faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jeſus "Chriſt," &c. Moreover *the Spirit* himſelf, who is the author, fountain, and ſpring of all graces and comforts, is procured for us by his death and reſurrection: Gal. iii. 13, 14. "Chriſt hath "redeemed us from the curſe of the law, being made a curſe for "us; for it is written, curſed is every one that hangeth on a "tree: that the bleſſing of Abraham might come upon the Gen-"tiles through Jeſus Chriſt, that we might receive the promiſe

Digitized by Google

"of the Spirit through faith." That Spirit that first sanctified, and since hath so often sealed, comforted, directed, resolved, guided, and quickened your souls, had not come to perform any of these blessed offices upon your hearts, if Christ had not died.

3. *All eternal good things* are the purchase of his blood. Heaven, and all the glory thereof, is purchased for you that are believers, with this price. Hence that glory, whatever it be, is called "an "inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, "reserved in heaven for you:" To the lively hope whereof you are begotten again, "by the resurrection of Christ from the dead," 1 Pet. i. 3, 4. Not only present mercies are purchased for us, but things to come also, as it is 1 Cor. iii. 22. Man is a prudent and prospecting creature, and is not satisfied that it is well with him for the present, unless he have some assurance it shall be well with him for time to come. His mind is taken up about what shall be hereafter; and from the good or evil things to come, he raiseth up to himself vast hopes or fears.

Therefore to complete our happiness, and fill up the uttermost capacity of our souls, all the good of eternity is put into the account and inventory of the saints estate and inheritance. This happiness is ineffable; it is usually distinguished into what is *essential*, and what is *accessory* to it. The *essentials* of it, as far as we in our embodied estate can conceive, is either the *objective*, *subjective*, or *formal* happiness to be enjoyed in heaven.

The *objective* happiness is God himself, Psal. lxxiii. 25. "Whom have I in heaven but thee?" If it could be supposed (saith one) that God should withdraw from the saints in heaven, and say, Take heaven, and divide it among you; but as for me, I will withdraw from you; the saints would fall a weeping in heaven, and say, Lord, take heaven, and give it to whom thou wilt; it is no heaven to us, except thou be there: Heaven would be very *Bochim* to the saints without God. In this, our glory in heaven consists, to be ever with the Lord, 1 Thess. iv. 17. God himself is the chief part of a saint's inheritance; in which sense, as some will understand, Rom. viii. 1. they are called *heirs of God*.

The *subjective* glory and happiness is the attemperation and suiting of the soul and body to God. This is begun in sanctification, and perfected in glorification. It consists in removing from both all that is indecent, and inconsistent with a state of such complete glory and happiness, and in superinducting and clothing it with all heavenly qualities.

The immunities of the body are its freedom from all natural infirmities; which as they come in, so they go out with sin. Thenceforth there shall be no diseases, deformities, pains, flaws,

Digitized by Google

monſtroſities; their good phyſician death hath cured all this, and their vile bodies ſhall be made like unto Chriſt's glorious body, Phil. iii. 21. and be made a ſpiritual body, 1. Cor. xv. 44. For *agility*, like the chariots of *Aminadab*; for *beauty*, as the top of *Lebanon*; for *incorruptibility*, as if they were *pure ſpirits*.

The *ſoul* alſo is diſcharged and freed from all darkneſs and ignorance of mind, being now able to diſcern all truths in God, that chryſtal ocean of truth. The leaks of the memory ſtopt for ever; the roving of the fancy perfectly cured; the ſtubbornneſs and reluctancy of the will for ever ſubdued, and retained in due and full ſubjection to God. So that the ſaints in glory ſhall be free from all that now troubles them; they ſhall never ſin more, nor be once tempted ſo to do, for no ſerpent hiſſes in that paradiſe; they ſhall never grieve nor groan more, for God ſhall wipe away all tears from their eyes. They ſhall never be troubled more, for God will then recompenſe tribulation to their troublers, and to them that are troubled, reſt; they ſhall never doubt more, for fruition excludes doubting.

The *formal* happineſs is the fulneſs of ſatisfaction reſulting from the bleſſed ſight and enjoyment of God, by a ſoul ſo attempered to him, Pſal. xvii. 15. "When I awake I ſhall be ſatisfied with thy likeneſs." This ſight of God, in glory, called the beatifical viſion, muſt needs yield ineffable ſatisfaction to the beholding ſoul, inaſmuch as it will be an *intuitive* viſion. The intellectual or mental eye ſhall ſee God, 1 John iii. 2. The corporeal glorified eye ſhall ſee Chriſt, Job xix. 26, 27. What a raviſhing viſion will this be! and how much will it exceed all reports and apprehenſions we had here of it! Surely one half was not told us. It will be a *transformative viſion*, it will change the beholder into its own image and likeneſs. "We ſhall be like him, for we ſhall ſee him "as he is," 1 John iii. 2. As iron put into the fire, becomes all fiery; ſo the ſoul, by converſing with God, is changed into his very ſimilitude. It will be an *appropriative viſion*; "Whom I ſhall ſee for myſelf," Job xix. 26, 27. In heaven intereſt is clear and undoubted; fear is caſt out: no need of marks and ſigns there; for what a man ſees and enjoys, how can he doubt of? It will be a *raviſhing viſion*; theſe we have by faith are ſo, how much more thoſe in glory? How was Paul tranſported, when he was in a viſional way wrapt up into the third heaven, and heard the unutterable things; though he was not admitted into the bleſſed ſociety, but was with them, as the angels are in our aſſemblies, a ſtander-by, a looker-on. If a ſpark do ſo inflame, what is it to lie down like a Phœnix in her bed of ſpices! Like a Salamander to live and move in the fire of love! It will alſo be an *eternal viſion*; *videbimus et videbimus*, (as Auguſtus ſaid) we ſhall then be

Digitized by Google

at leasure for this employment, and have no diversions from it for ever. No evening is mentioned to the seventh day's sabbath; no night in the new Jerusalem. And therefore,

Lastly, It will be *a fully satisfying vision*: God will then be all in all, *Etiam ipsa curiositas satietur*, "Curiosity itself will be satisfied." The blessed soul will feel itself blessed, filled, satisfied in every part. Ah, what a happiness is here! to look and love, to drink and sing, and drink again at the fountain head of the highest glory! And if at any time its eye be turned from a direct to a reflex sight upon what it once was, how it was wrought on, how fitted for his glory, how wonderfully distinguished by special grace from them that are howling in flames, whilst himself is shouting aloud upon his bed of everlasting rest; and this will enhance the glory.

And so also will the *accessories* of this blessedness be; *The place* where God is enjoyed, the *empyrean heaven*, the city of God, whither Christ ascended, where the great assembly are met. Paradise and Canaan were but the types of it; more excelling and transcending the royal palaces of earthly princes, than they do a pigeon-hole. *The company* also with whom he is enjoyed, adds to the glory. A blissful society indeed! store of good neighbours in that city. There we shall have familiar converse with angels, whose appearances now are insupportable by poor mortals: There will be sweet and full closings also betwixt the saints; Luther and Zuinglius are there agreed. Here they could not fully close with one another, and no wonder, for they could not fully close with themselves. But there is perfect harmony and unity; all meeting and closing in God, as lines in the center. This is a blessed glimpse of your inheritance.

Thirdly, All this is purchased for believers: hence it is called, "the inheritance of the saints in light, Col. i. 12. "All is yours, "for ye are Christ's," that is the tenure, 1 Cor. iii. 23. So Rom. viii. 30. "Whom he did predestinate, them he also call-"ed; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he "justified, them he also glorified." Only those that are sons, are heirs, Rom. viii. 17. The unrighteous shall not inherit, 1 Cor. vi. 9. "It is the Father's good pleasure, to give the kingdom to "the little flock," Luke xii. 32.

Inf. 1. Hath Christ not only redeemed you from wrath, but purchased such an eternal inheritance also by the overplus of his merit for you? *O how well content should believers then be with their lot of providence in this life, be it what it will!* Content did I say? I speak too low; overcome, ravished, filled with praises and thanksgivings; how low, how poor, how afflicted soever for the present they are. O let not such things as grumbling, repining, fretting at providence, be found, or once named among the expectants of this

Digitized by Google

inheritance! Suppose you had taken a beggar from your door, and adopted him to be your son, and made him heir of a large inheritance, and after this he should contest and quarrel with you for a trifle; could you bear it? How to work the spirit of a saint into contentment with a low condition here, I have laid down several rules in another discourse*, to which, for the present I refer the reader.

Infer. 2. *With what weaned affections should the people of God walk up and down this world, content to live, and willing to die?* For things present are theirs if they live,, and things to come are theirs if they die. Paul expresses himself in a frame of holy indifferency, Phil. i. 23. "Which to chuse I know not." Many of them that are now in fruition of their inheritance above, had *vitam in patientia, mortem in desiderio*, "Life in patience, and death in desire," while they tabernacled with us. "O (cried one) what would I give to "have a bed made to my wearied soul in Christ's bosom?——I "cannot tell you what sweet pain and delightful torments are in "his love; I often challenge time for holding us asunder; I pro-"fess to you, I have no rest till I be over head and ears in love's "ocean. If Christ's love (that fountain of delights) were laid "open to me as I would wish, O how overcome would this my "soul be! I half call his absence cruel; and the mask and vail on "his face a cruel covering, that hideth such a fair, fair face from "a sick soul. I dare not challenge himself, but his absence is a "mountain of iron upon my heavy heart. O when shall we meet! "How long is the dawning of the marriage-day! O sweet Lord "Jesus, take wide steps! O my Lord, come over mountains at "one stride! O my beloved, flee like a roe, or young hart upon "the mountains of separation! O if he would fold the heavens to-"gether like an old cloak, and shovel time and days out of the "way, and make ready in haste the Lamb's wife for her husband! "Since he looked upon me, my heart is not mine own."

Who can be blamed for desiring to see that fair inheritance which is purchased for him! But, truly, should God hold up the soul by the power of faith, from day to day, to such sights as these, who would be content to live a day more on earth! How should we be ready to pull down the prison walls, and not have patience to wait till God open the door! As the Heathen said,

Victuroſque dii celant, ut vivere durent.

And truly the wisdom of God is in this specially remarkable, in giving the new creature such an admirable crasis, and even temper, as that scripture, 2 Thess. iii. 5. expresses, "The Lord di-

* A Saint indeed.

Digitized by Google

" rect your hearts into the love of God and patient waiting for " Chriſt." Love enflames with deſire, patience allays that fervor. So that fervent deſires (as one haply expreſſes it) are allayed with meek ſubmiſſion; mighty love with ſtrong patience. And had not God twiſted together theſe two principles in the Chriſtian's conſtitution, he had framed a creature to be a torment to itſelf, to live upon a very rack.

Inf. 3. *Hence we infer the impoſſibility of their ſalvation that know not Chriſt, nor have intereſt in his blood.* Neither Heathens, nor merely nominal Chriſtians, can inherit heaven. I know ſome are very indulgent to the Heathen, and many formal Chriſtians are too much ſo to themſelves: but union by faith with Jeſus Chriſt, is the only way revealed in ſcripture, by which we hope to come to the heavenly inheritance. I know it ſeems hard, that ſuch brave men, as ſome of the Heathens were, ſhould be damned: but the ſcripture knows no other way to glory, but Chriſt put on, and applied by faith. And it is the common ſuffrage of modern ſound divines, that no man, by the ſole conduct of nature, without the knowledge of Chriſt, can be ſaved. There is but one way to glory for all the world, John xiv. 6. " No man cometh to " the Father but by me." Gal. iii. 14. " The bleſſing of Abraham " comes upon the Gentiles through faith." Scripture aſſerts the impoſſibility of being or doing, any thing that is truly evangelically good, out of Chriſt, John xv. 5. " Without me ye can do " nothing." And Heb. xi. 6. " Without faith it is impoſſible to " pleaſe God."

Scripture everywhere connects and chains ſalvation with vocation, Rom. viii. 30. and vocation with the goſpel, Rom. x. 14. To thoſe that plead for the ſalvation of Heathens, and profane Chriſtians, we may apply that tart rebuke of Bernard, that while ſome labour to make Plato a Chriſtian, he feared they therein did prove themſelves to be Heathens.

Inf. 4. *How greatly are we all concerned to clear up our title to the heavenly inheritance!* It is horrible to ſee how induſtrious many are for an inheritance on earth, and how careleſs for heaven. By which we may plainly ſee how vilely the noble ſoul is depreſſed by ſin, and ſunk down into fleſh, minding only the concernments of the fleſh. Hear me, ye that labour for the world, as if heaven were in it; what will ye do when at death you ſhall look back over your ſhoulder, and ſee what you have ſpent your time and ſtrength for, ſhrinking and vaniſhing away from you? When you ſhall look forward, and ſee vaſt eternity opening its mouth to ſwallow you up; O then what would you give for a well-grounded aſſurance of an eternal inheritance!

O, therefore, if you have any concernment for your poor ſouls;

Digitized by Google

if it be not indifferent to you what becomes of them, whether they be saved, or whether they be damned, "give all diligence to "make your calling and election sure," 2 Pet. i. 10. "Work out "your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God that "worketh in you both to will and to do of his own good pleasure," Phil. ii. 12. Remember it is *salvation* you work for, and that's no trifle, Remember it is *your own salvation*, and not another's. It is for thy own poor soul that thou art striving; and what hast thou more?

Remember, now God offers you his helping hand; now the Spirit waits upon you in the means, but of the continuance thereof you have no assurance; for it is of *his own good pleasure*, and not at yours. To your work, souls, to your work. Ah, strive as men that know what an inheritance in heaven is worth.

And, as for you that have solid evidence that it is yours; O, that with hands and eyes lifted up to heaven, you would adore that free grace, that hath entitled a child of wrath to a heavenly inheritance! Walk as becomes heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ. Be often looking heaven-ward when wants pinch here. O look to that fair estate you have reserved in heaven for you, and say, I am hastening home; and when I come thither, all my wants shall be supplied. Consider what it cost Christ to purchase it for thee; and with a deep sense of what he hath laid out for thee, let thy soul say,

Blessed be God for Jesus Christ.

SERMON XVI.

Of the Kingly Office of Christ, as it is executed spiritually upon the Souls of the Redeemed.

2 COR. x. 5.

Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

WE now come to the *Regal office*, by which our glorious Mediator executes and dischargeth the undertaken design of our redemption. Had he not, as our Prophet, opened the way of life and salvation to the children of men, they could never have known it; and if they had clearly known it, except, as their Priest,

Digitized by Google

he had offered up himself, to impetrate and obtain redemption for them, they could not have been redeemed virtually by his blood; and if they had been so redeemed, yet had he not lived in the capacity of a King, to apply this purchase of his blood to them, they could have had no actual, personal benefit by his death: for what he revealed as a Prophet, he purchased as a Priest; and what he so revealed and purchased as a Prophet and Priest, he applies as a King: first subduing the souls of his elect to his spiritual government; then ruling them as his subjects, and ordering all things in the kingdom of Providence for their good. So that Christ hath a twofold kingdom, the one *spiritual* and *internal*, by which he subdues and rules the hearts of his people; the other *providential* and *external*, whereby he guides, rules, and orders all things in the world, in a blessed subordination to their eternal salvation. I am to speak from this text of his spiritual and internal kingdom.

These words are considered two ways, either *relatively* or *absolutely*. Considered relatively, they are a vindication of the apostle from the unjust censures of the Corinthians, who, very unworthily, interpreted his gentleness, condescension, and winning affability, to be no better than a fawning upon them for self-ends; and the authority he exercised, no better than pride and imperiousness. But hereby he lets them know, that as Christ needs not, so he never used such carnal artifices: *The weapons of our warfare* (saith he) *are not carnal, but mighty, through God*, &c.

Absolutely considered, they hold forth the efficacy of the gospel, in the plainness and simplicity of it, for the subduing of rebellious sinners to Christ: and in them we have these three things to consider,

1. The *oppositions* made by sinners against the assaults of the gospel, *viz. imaginations*, or reasonings, as the word λογισμους, may be fitly rendered. He means the subtleties, slights, excuses, subterfuges, and arguings of fleshly-minded men; in which they fortify and entrench themselves against the convictions of the word*: yea, and there are not only such carnal reasonings, but many proud, high conceits with which poor creatures swell, and scorn to submit to the abasing, humble, self-denying way of the gospel. These are the fortifications erected against Christ by the carnal mind.

2. We have here the *conquest* which the gospel obtains over sinners, thus fortified against it; it casts down and overthrows, and takes in these strong holds. Thus Christ spoils Satan of his

* He makes use of the word *strong hold*, by an elegant metaphor, to express every thing in which the enemies of the gospel trust, fortify and exalt themselves against the truth of the heavenly word; such as carnal wisdom, learning, and eloquence. *Glass.*

Digitized by Google

armour in which he truſted, by ſhewing the ſinner that all this can be no defence to his ſoul againſt the wrath of God. But that is not all: in the next place,

3. You have here the *improvement of the victory.* Chriſt doth not only lead away theſe enemies ſpoiled, but brings them into obedience to himſelf, *i. e.* makes them, after converſion, ſubjects of his own kingdom, obedient, uſeful, and ſerviceable to himſelf; and ſo is more than a conqueror. They do not only lay down their arms, and fight no more againſt Chriſt with them; but repair to his camp, and fight for Chriſt, with thoſe reaſons of theirs that were before employed againſt him: as it is ſaid of Jerom, Origen, and Tertullian, that they came into Canaan, laden with Egyptian gold; *i. e.* they came into the church full of excellent learning and abilities, with which they eminently ſerved Jeſus Chriſt. "* O "bleſſed victory, where the conqueror, and conquered, both tri- "umph together!" And thus enemies and rebels are ſubdued, and made ſubjects of the ſpiritual kingdom of Chriſt. Hence the doctrinal note is,

Doct. *That Jeſus Chriſt exerciſes a Kingly power over the ſouls of all whom the goſpel ſubdues to his obedience.*

No ſooner were the Coloſſians delivered out of the power of darkneſs, but they were immediately tranſlated into the kingdom of Chriſt, the dear Son, Col. i. 13.

This kingdom of Chriſt, which is our preſent ſubject, is the internal ſpiritual kingdom, which is ſaid to be within the ſaints, Luke xvii. 20, 21. "The kingdom of God is within you." Chriſt ſits as an enthroned king in the hearts, conſciences, and affections of his willing people, Pſal. cx. 3. And his kingdom conſiſts in "righteouſneſs, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt, Rom. xiv. 17. and it is properly monarchical, as appears in the margin †.

In the proſecution of this point, I will ſpeak doctrinally to theſe three heads.

Firſt, How Chriſt obtains the throne in the hearts of men.

Secondly, How he rules in it, and by what acts he exerciſes his kingly authority.

Thirdly, What are the privileges of thoſe ſouls over whom Chriſt reigns. And then apply it.

Firſt, We will open the way and manner in which Chriſt ob-

* *O beata victoria, ubi victi cum victoribus ſimul triumphant!* Meyer in loc.

† This internal government is monarchical, and it muſt be ſo; for the right of governing men's conſciences belongs to none but him, who is both infinitely wiſe and moſt powerful; neither hath Chriſt in this government any vice-gerent, to whom his power and authority are committed.

Digitized by Google

tains a throne in the hearts of men, and that is by *conqueſt* *: for though the ſouls of the elect are his by donation, and right of redemption; the Father gave them to him, and he died for them; yet Satan hath the firſt poſſeſſion: and ſo it fares with Chriſt, as it did with Abraham, to whom God gave the land of Canaan by promiſe and covenant, but the Canaanites, Perizites, and ſons of Anak, had the actual poſſeſſion of it, and Abraham's poſterity muſt fight for it, and win it by inches, before they enjoy it. The houſe is conveyed to Chriſt by him that built it, but the ſtrong man armed keeps the poſſeſſion of it, till a ſtronger than he comes and ejects him, Luke xi. 20, 21, 22. Chriſt muſt fight his way into the ſoul, though he have a right to enter, as into his dearly purchaſed poſſeſſion. And ſo he doth; for when the time of recovering them is come, he ſends forth his armies to ſubdue them; as it is Pſal. cx. 3. "Thy people ſhall be willing in the day of thy "power." The † Hebrew may as fitly be rendered, and ſo is by ſome, "in the day of thine armies;" when the Lord Jeſus ſent forth his armies of prophets, apoſtles, evangeliſts, paſtors, teachers, under the conduct of his Spirit, armed with that two-edged ſword, the word of God, which is ſharp and powerful, Heb. iv. 12. But that is not all: he cauſes armies of convictions, and ſpiritual troubles, to begird and ſtraiten them on every ſide, ſo that they know not what to do. Theſe convictions, like a ſhower of arrows, ſtrike, point-blank, into their conſciences; Acts ii. 37. "When they heard this, they were pricked to the heart, and ſaid, "Men and brethren, what ſhall we do?" Chriſt's arrows are ſharp in the hearts of his enemies, whereby the people fall under him, Pſal. xlv. 5, 6. By theſe convictions he batters down all their looſe vain hopes, and levels them with the earth.

Now all their weak pleas and defences, from the general mercy of God, the example of others, *&c.* prove but as paper-walls to them. Theſe ſhake their hearts, even to the very foundation, and overturn every high thought there, that exalts itſelf againſt the Lord. This day, in which Chriſt ſits down before the ſoul, and ſummons it by ſuch meſſengers as theſe, is a day of diſtreſs within: yea, ſuch a day of trouble, that none is like it. But though it be ſo, yet Satan hath ſo deeply entrenched himſelf in

* For unlimited power, even in the way of vicegerency, can be competent to no man: there is alſo a certain kind of union which excludes all vicegerency: ſuch as that of Father and Son, huſband and wife: for certainly here ſubſtitution cannot take place. *Maccov. loc. Com. p.* 641.

† חילך בימיך *In die exercitus tui.* To wit, When having ſent forth thy apoſtles and other teachers of the church, thou wilt, by the ſound of thy goſpel, gather together and conſtitute to thyſelf a kingdom. *Mollier on this place.*

Digitized by Google

the mind and will, that the ſoul yields not at the firſt ſummons, till its proviſions within are ſpent, and all its towers of pride, and walls of vain confidence, be undermined by the goſpel, and ſhaken down about its ears: and then the ſoul deſires a parley with Chriſt. O now it would be glad of terms, any terms, if it may but ſave its life: let all go as a prey to the conqueror. Now it ſends many ſuch meſſengers as theſe to Chriſt, who is come now to the very gates of the ſoul; mercy, Lord, mercy; O were I but aſſured thou wouldeſt receive, ſpare, and pardon me, I would open to thee the next moment! Thus the ſoul is "ſhut up to the faith of "Chriſt," as it is, Gal. iii. 23. and reduced now to the greateſt ſtrait and loſs imaginable; and now the merciful King, whoſe only deſign is to conquer the heart, hangs forth the white flag of mercy before the ſoul, giving it hopes it ſhall be ſpared, pitied, and pardoned, though ſo long in rebellion againſt him, if yet it will yield itſelf to Chriſt. Many ſtaggerings, heſitations, irreſolutions, doubts, fears, ſcruples, half-reſolves, reaſonings for and againſt, there are at the council-table of man's own heart, at this time. Sometimes there is no hope; Chriſt will ſlay me, if I go forth to him, and then it trembles. But then, who ever found him ſo that tried him? Other ſouls have yielded, and found mercy beyond all their expectations. O but I have been a deſperate enemy againſt him. Admit it, yet thou haſt the word of a King for it; "Let the wicked forſake his way, and the unrighteous "man his thoughts; and let him turn to the Lord, and he will "have mercy on him; and to our God, for he will abundantly "pardon him," Iſa. lv. 7.

But the time of mercy is paſt, I have ſtood out too long: yet if it were ſo, how is it that Chriſt hath not made ſhort work, and cut me off? ſet fire, hell fire to my ſoul, and withdrawn the ſiege? Still he waiteth that he may be gracious, and is exalted that he may have compaſſion. A thouſand ſuch debates there are, till, at laſt, the ſoul conſidering, if it abide in rebellion, it muſt needs periſh; if it go forth to Chriſt, it can but periſh: and being ſomewhat encouraged by the meſſages of grace ſent into the ſoul, at this time, ſuch as in Heb. vii. 25. "Wherefore he is able "to ſave to the uttermoſt, all that come unto God by him;" and, John vi. 37. "He that cometh to me, I will in nowiſe caſt out;" and in Mat. xi. 28. "Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy "laden, and I will give you reſt." It is, at laſt, reſolved to open to Chriſt; and ſaith, "Stand open ye everlaſting gates, and be ye "opened ye everlaſting doors, and the King of glory ſhall come "in." Now, the will ſpontaneouſly opens to Chriſt: that royal fort ſubmits and yields; all the affections open to him. The will brings Chriſt the keys of all the rooms in the ſoul. Concerning

Digitized by Google

the triumphant entrance of Christ into the soul, we may say, as the Psalmist rhetorically speaks concerning the triumphant entrance of Israel into Canaan, Psal. cxiv. 5, 6. "The mountains skipped "like rams, and the little hills like lambs; what aileth thee, O "thou sea, that thou fleddest? thou Jordan, that thou wast dri-"ven back?" So here, in a like rhetorical triumph, we may say, the mountains and hills skipped like rams, and the fixed and obstinate will, starts from its own basis and centre; the rocky heart rends in twain. A poor soul comes into the word, full of ignorance, pride, self-love, desperate hardness, and fixed resolutions to go on in its way: and, by an hours discourse, the tide turns, Jordan is driven back. What aileth thee, thou stout will, that thou surrendereſt to Christ! thou hard heart, that thou relenteſt, and the waters gush out? And thus the soul is won to Christ; he writes down his terms, and the soul willingly subscribes them. Thus it comes in to Christ by free and hearty submission, desiring nothing more than to come under the government of Christ, for the time to come.

Secondly, Let us see how Christ rules in the souls of such as submit to him. And there are six things in which he exerts his kingly authority over them.

1. *He imposes a new law upon them, and enjoins them to be severe and punctual in their obedience to it**. The soul was a Belialite before, and could endure no restraint; its lusts gave it laws. "We "ourselves were sometimes foolish, disobedient, serving divers "lusts and pleasures," Tit. iii. 3. Whatever the flesh craved, and the sensual appetite whined after, it must have, cost what it would; if damnation were the price of it, it would have it, provided it should not be present pay. Now, it must not be any longer ανομος Θεω, αλλ' εννομος τω Χριστω, without law to God; but under law to Christ. Those are the articles of peace which the soul willingly subscribes in the day of its admission to mercy, Mat. xi. 29. "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me." This "law "of the spirit of life which is in Christ Jesus makes them free "from the law of sin and death," Rom. viii. 2. Here is much strictness, but no bondage; for the law is not only written in Christ's statute-book, the bible, but copied out by his spirit upon the hearts of his subjects, in correspondent principles; which makes obedience a pleasure, and self-denial easy. Christ's yoke is lined with love, so that it never galls the necks of his people:

* It is proper to Christ, who rules absolutely and monarchically over the souls and consciences of men, to bind them by his own authority. None but Christ can do it, 1. Because this authority of Christ is infinite. 2. Because it is the authority of a husband which cannot be communicated to any other, 1 Cor. ix. 21, 22.

Digitized by Google

1 John v. 3. "His commandments are not grievous." The ſoul that comes under Chriſt's government, muſt receive law from Chriſt; and under law every thought of the heart muſt come.

2. *He rebukes and chaſtiſes ſouls for the violations and tranſgreſſions of his law.* That is another act of Chriſt's regal authority: "whom he loves he rebukes and chaſtens," Heb. xii. 6, 7. Theſe chaſtiſements of Chriſt are either by the rod of *providence* upon their *bodies*, and outward comforts, or upon their *ſpirits* and inward comforts. Sometimes his rebukes are ſmart upon the outward man, 1 Cor. xi. 30. "For this cauſe, many among you are "weakly and ſick, and many ſleep." They had not that due regard to his body that became them, and he will make their bodies to ſmart for it. And he had rather their fleſh ſhould ſmart, than their ſouls ſhould periſh. Sometimes he ſpares their outward, and afflicts their inner man, which is a much ſmarter rod. He withdraws peace, and takes away joy from the ſpirits of his people. The hidings of his face are ſore rebukes. However, all is for emendation, not for deſtruction. And it is not the leaſt privilege of Chriſt's ſubjects to have a ſeaſonable and ſanctified rod to reduce them from the ways of ſin: Pſal. xxiii. 3. "Thy rod and "thy ſtaff, they comfort me." Others are ſuffered to go on ſtubbornly in the way of their own hearts; Chriſt will not ſpend a rod upon them for their good, will not call them to account for any of their tranſgreſſions, but will reckon with them for all together in hell.

3. *Another regal act of Chriſt, is the reſtraining and keeping back his ſervants from iniquity, and withholding them from thoſe courſes which their own hearts would incline, and lead them to*; for, even in them, there is a ſpirit bent to backſliding, but the Lord in tenderneſs over them, keeps back their ſouls from iniquity, and that when they are upon the very brink of ſin: "My feet were almoſt "gone, my ſteps were well nigh ſlipt," Pſal. lxxiii. 2. Then doth the Lord prevent ſin, by removing the occaſion providentially, or by helping them to reſiſt the temptation, graciouſly aſſiſting their ſpirits in the trial, ſo that no temptation ſhall befal them, but a way of eſcape ſhall be opened, that they may be able to bear it, 1 Cor. x. 13. And thus his people have frequent occaſions to bleſs his name for his preventing goodneſs, when they are almoſt in the midſt of all evil. And this I take to be the meaning of Gal. v. 16. "This, I ſay then, walk in the Spirit, and ye ſhall "not fulfil the luſts of the fleſh;" tempted by them, you may be, but fulfil them ye ſhall not; my ſpirit ſhall cauſe the temptation to die, and wither away in the womb, in the embryo of it, ſo that it ſhall not come to a full birth.

Digitized by Google

4. *He protects them in his ways**, *and suffers them not to relapse from him into a state of sin, and bondage to Satan any more.* Indeed, Satan is restless in his endeavours to reduce them again to his obedience; he never leaves tempting and soliciting for their return; and where he finds a false professor he prevails; but Christ keeps his, that they depart not again. John xvii. 12. "All that "thou hast given me I have kept, and none of them is lost, "but the son of perdition." They are "kept by the mighty "power of God, through faith unto salvation," 1 Pet. i. 5. Kept, as in a garrison, according to the importance of that word. None more solicited, none more safe than the people of God. They are "preserved in Christ Jesus," Jude i. It is not their own grace that secures them, but Christ's care, and continual watchfulness. "† Our own graces left to themselves would quickly prove but "weights, sinking us to our own ruin," as one speaks. This is his covenant with them, Jer. xxxii. 4. "I will put my fear in their "hearts, that they shall not depart from me." Thus, as a king he preserves them.

5. *As a king he rewards their obedience, and encourages their sincere service.* Though all they do for Christ be duty, yet he hath united their comfort with their duty; "this I had, because I kept "thy precepts," Psal. cxix. 56. They are engaged to take this encouragement with them to every duty, that he whom they seek "is a bountiful rewarder of such as diligently seek him," Heb. xi. 6. O what a good master do the saints serve! Hear how a king expostulates with his subjects, Jer. ii. 31. "Have I been a barren "wilderness, or a land of darkness to you?" q. d. Have I been such a hard master to you? Have you any reason to complain of my service? To whomsoever I have been strait-handed, surely I have not been so to you. You have not found the ways or wages of sin like mine.

6. ‡ *He pacifies all inward troubles, and commands peace when their spirits are tumultuous.* This "peace of God rules in their "hearts," Col. iii. 15. it doth βραβευειν act the part of an um-

* Christ and all his little ones, under his two wings, and in the compass or circle of his arms, are so sure, that cast him and them in the bottom of the sea, he shall come up again, and not lose one. An odd one cannot, nor shall be lost in the telling.

† *Perfectiones sibi relictæ, sunt pondera ad ruinam.* Gers.

‡ It acts the part of an umpire or judge among the other affections, for this is the meaning of the word βραβευειν; when therefore, these tumultuous passions, anger, hatred and revenge rise in our hearts, this peace of God ought to do its office, *i. e.* put an end to these tumults like the judge in ancient games. *Daven. in Col.*

Digitized by Google

pire, in appeasing strife within. When the tumultuous affections are up, and in a hurry; when anger, hatred, and revenge begin to rise in the soul, this hushes and stills all. "I will hearken (saith "the church) what God the Lord will speak, for he will speak "peace to his people, and to his saints," Psal. lxxv. 8. He that saith to the raging sea, be still, and it obeys him; he can only pacify the disquieted spirit. They say of frogs, that if they be croaking never so much in the night, bring but a light among them, and they are all quiet: such a light is the peace of God among our disordered affections. These are Christ's regal acts. And he puts them forth upon the souls of his people, powerfully, sweetly, suitably.

(1.) Powerfully: whether he restrains from sin, or impels to duty, he doth it with a soul-determining efficacy: for "his king-"dom is not in word, but in power," 1 Cor. iv. 20. And those whom his Spirit leads, go bound in the spirit, to the fulfilling and discharge of their duties, Acts xx. 22. And yet,

(2.) He rules not by compulsion, but *most sweetly*. His law is a law of love, written upon their hearts. The church is the Lamb's wife, Rev. xix. 7. "A bruised reed he shall not break, "and smoaking flax he shall not quench," Isa. xlii. 2, 3. "I be-"seech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ," saith the apostle, 2 Cor. x. 1. For he delighteth in *free*, not in *forced* obedience. He rules *Children*, not *slaves*; and so his *kingly power* is mixed with *fatherly love*. His yoke is not made of *iron*, but *gold*.

(3.) He rules them suitably to their natures, in a rational way; Hos. xi. 4. "I drew them with the cords of a man, with bands "of love;" i. e. in a way proper to convince their reason, and work upon their ingenuity. And thus his eternal kingdom is administered by his Spirit, who is his *prorex*, or viceregent in our hearts.

Thirdly, and lastly, we will open the privileges pertaining to all the subjects of this spiritual kingdom. And they are such as follow.

1. *Those souls, over whom Christ reigns, are certainly and fully set free from the curse of the law.* "If the Son makes you free "then are you free indeed," John viii. 36. I say not, they are free from the law as a rule of life; such a freedom were no privilege to them at all: but free from the rigorous exactions, and terrible maledictions of it; to hear our liberty proclaimed from this bondage, is the joyful sound indeed, the most blessed voice that ever our ears heard. And this all that are in Christ shall hear; "If we be led by the Spirit, we are not under the law," Gal. v. 18. "Blessed are the people that hear this joyful sound," Psal. lxxxix. 15.

Digitized by Google

2. Another privilege of Christ's subjects, is, *freedom from the dominion of sin.* Rom. vi. 14. "Sin shall not reign over them; for they are not under the law, but under grace." One heaven cannot bear two suns; nor one soul two kings: when Christ takes the throne, sin quits it. It is true, the being of sin is there still; its defiling and troubling power remains still; but its dominion is abolished. O joyful tidings! O welcome day!

3. Another privilege of Christ's subjects, is, *protection in all the troubles and dangers to which their souls or bodies are exposed.* "This "man shall be the peace, when the Assyrian shall come into our "land, and when he shall tread in our palaces," Mic. v. 5. Kings owe protection to their subjects: none so able, so faithful in that work as Christ; all "thou gavest me, I have kept, and none "is lost," John xvii. 12.

4. Another privilege of Christ's subjects, is, *a merciful and tender-bearing of their burdens and infirmities.* They have a meek and patient king; "Tell the daughters of Sion, thy king cometh meek "and lowly;" Mat. xxi. 5. Mat. xi. 29. "Take my yoke, and "learn of me, for I am meek and lowly." The meek Moses could not bear the provocations of the people, Numb. xi. 12. but Christ bears them all: "He carries the lambs in his arms, and "gently leads them that be with young," Isa. xlii. 11. He is one that can have compassion upon the ignorant, and them that are out of the way.

5. Again, *Sweet peace, and tranquility of soul, is the privilege of the subjects of this kingdom:* for this kingdom "consisteth in peace, "and joy in the Holy Ghost," Rom. xiv. 17. And till souls come under his sceptre, they shall never find peace: "come unto "me, ye that are weary, I will give you rest." Yet do not mistake, I say not, they have all actual peace, at all times: no, they often break that peace by sin; but they have the root of peace, the ground-work and cause of peace. If they have not peace, yet they have that which is convertible into peace at any time. They also are in a state of peace, Rom. v. 11. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God." This is a feast every day, a mercy which they only can duly value, that are in the depths of trouble for sin.

6. And lastly, *everlasting salvation is the privilege of all over whom Christ reigns.* Prince and Saviour are joined together, Acts v. 31. He that can say, "thou shalt guide me with thy coun-"sels," may add what follows, "and afterwards bring me to glo-"ry," Psal. lxxiii. 24. Indeed, the kingdom of grace doth but breed up children for the kingdom of glory. And to speak as the thing is, it is the kingdom of heaven here begun. The difference

Digitized by Google

betwixt them is not *specifical*, but only *gradual*; and therefore this, as well as that, bears the name of the kingdom of heaven. The king is the same, and the subjects the same. The subjects of this are shortly to be translated to that kingdom. Thus I have named, and indeed but named, some few of those inestimable privileges of Christ's subjects. We next apply it.

Inference 1. *How great is their sin and misery who continue in bondage to sin and Satan, and refuse the government of Christ!* Who had rather sit under the shadow of that bramble, than under the sweet and powerful government of Christ. Satan writes his laws in the blood of his subjects, grinds them with cruel oppression, wears them out with bondage to divers lusts, and rewards their service with everlasting misery. And yet how few are weary of it, and willing to come over to Christ! "Behold (saith one of Christ's "heralds*) Christ is in the field, sent of God to recover his right "and your liberty. His royal standard is pitched in the gospel, "and proclamation made, that if any poor sinners, weary of the "Devil's government, and laden with the miserable chains of his "spiritual bondage, (so as these irons of his sins enter into his "very soul, to afflict it with the sense of them) shall thus come "and repair to Christ, he shall have protection from God's justice, "the Devil's wrath, and sin's dominion; in a word, he shall have "rest, and that glorious, Isa. xi. 10."

And yet how few stir a foot towards Christ, but are willing to have their ears bored, and be perpetual slaves to that cruel tyrant? O when will sinners be weary of their bondage, and sigh after deliverance! If any such poor soul shall read these lines, let them know, and I do proclaim it in the name of my royal Master, and give him the word of a King for it, he shall not be rejected by Christ, John vi. 37. Come, poor sinners, come, the Lord Jesus is a merciful King, and never did, nor will hang up that poor penitent, that puts the rope about his own neck, and submits to mercy.

Inf. 2. *How much doth it concern us to enquire and know whose government we are under, and who is king over our souls; whether Christ or Satan be in the throne, and sways the sceptre over our souls?*

Reader, the work I would now engage thy soul in, is the same that Jesus Christ will thoroughly and effectually do in the great day. Then will he gather out of his kingdom every thing that offends, separate the tares and wheat, divide the whole world into two ranks or grand divisions, how many divisions and subdivisions soever there be in it now. It nearly concerns thee therefore to know who is Lord and King in thy soul. To help thee in this great

* Gurnall's Christian armour, p. 218.

Digitized by Google

work, make uſe of the following hints; for I cannot fully proſecute theſe things as I would.

1. † "To whom do you yield your obedience? His ſubjects and ſervants ye are to whom ye obey," Rom. vi. 16. It is but a mockery to give Chriſt the empty titles of Lord and King, whilſt ye give your real ſervice to ſin and Satan. What is this but like the Jews, to bow the knee to him, and ſay, Hail maſter, and crucify him? "Then are ye his diſciples, if ye do whatſoever he "commands you," John xv. 14. He that is Chriſt's ſervant in *jeſt*, ſhall be damned in *earneſt*. Chriſt doth not compliment with you; his pardons, promiſes, and ſalvation are real; O let your obedience be ſo too! Let it be ſincere and univerſal obedience; this will evidence your unfeigned ſubjection to Chriſt. Do not dare to enterprize any thing, till you know Chriſt's pleaſure and will, Rom. xii. 2. Enquire of Chriſt, as David did of the Lord, 1 Sam. xxiii. 9, 10, 11. Lord, may I do this or that? or ſhall I forbear? I beſeech thee tell thy ſervant.

2. *Have you the power of godlineſs, or a form of it only?* There be many that do but trifle in religion, and play about the ſkirts and borders of it; ſpending their time about jejune and barren controverſies: but as to the power of religion, and the life of godlineſs, which conſiſt in communion with God in duties and ordinances, which promote holineſs, and mortify their luſts, they concern not themſelves about theſe things. But ſurely "the kingdom of God "is not in word, but in power," 1 Cor. iv. 20. It is not meat and drink, (*i. e.* dry diſputes about meats and drinks) "but righte-"ouſneſs, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt; for he that "in theſe things ſerveth Chriſt, is acceptable to God, and ap-"proved of men," Rom. xiv. 17, 18. O I am afraid when the great hoſt of profeſſors ſhall be tried by theſe rules, they will ſhrink up into a little handful, as Gideon's hoſt did.

3. *Have ye the ſpecial ſaving knowledge of Chriſt?* All his ſubjects are tranſlated out of the kingdom of darkneſs, Col. i. 13. The devil, that ruleth over you in the days of your ignorance, is called *the ruler of the darkneſs of this world*; his ſubjects are all blind, elſe he could never rule them. As ſoon as their eyes be opened, they run out of his kingdom, and there is no retaining them in ſubjection to him any longer. O enquire then, whether you are brought out of darkneſs into this marvellous light! do you ſee your condi-

* O how many of us would have Chriſt divided into halves, that we might take the half of him only; his office, Jeſus, and ſalvation? But *Lord* is a cumberſome word, and to obey, and work out our own ſalvation, and perfect holineſs, is the cumberſome and ſtormy north ſide of Chriſt, and that we eſchew and ſhift off.

Digitized by Google

tion, how ſad, miſerable, wretched it is by nature? do you ſee your remedy, as it lies only in Chriſt, and his precious blood? Do you ſee the true way of obtaining intereſt in that blood by faith? doth this knowledge run into practice, and put you upon lamenting heartily your miſery by ſin? thirſting vehemently after Chriſt and his righteouſneſs? ſtriving continually for a heart to believe and cloſe with Chriſt? This will evidence you indeed to be tranſlated out of the kingdom of darkneſs into the kingdom of Chriſt.

4. *With whom do you delightfully aſſociate yourſelves? Who are your choſen companions?* You may ſee to whom you belong by the company you join yourſelves to. What do the ſubjects of Chriſt among the ſlaves of Satan? If the ſubjects of one kingdom be in another king's dominion, they love to be together with their own countrymen, rather than the natives of the place; ſo do the ſervants of Chriſt. They are a company of themſelves, as it is ſaid, Acts iv. 23. "They went to their own company." I know the ſubjects of both kingdoms are here mingled, and we cannot avoid the company of ſinners except we go out of the world, 1 Cor. v. 10. but yet all your delights ſhould be in the ſaints and in the excellent of the earth, Pſal. xvi. 3.

5. *Do you live holy and righteous lives?* If not, you may claim intereſt in Chriſt as your King, but he will never allow your claim. "The ſceptre of his kingdom is a ſceptre of righteouſneſs," Pſal. xlv. 6. If ye oppreſs, go beyond, and cheat your brethren, and yet call yourſelves Chriſt's ſubjects, what greater reproach can ye ſtudy to caſt upon him? What! is Chriſt the King of cheats? Doth he patronize ſuch things as theſe? No, no, pull off your vizards, and fall into your own places; you belong to another prince, and not to Chriſt.

Inf. 3. Doth Chriſt exerciſe ſuch a kingly power over the ſouls of all them that are ſubdued by the goſpel to him? *O then let all that are under Chriſt's government walk as the ſubjects of ſuch a King**. Imitate your King; the examples of kings are very influential upon their ſubjects. Your King hath commanded you not only to take his yoke upon you, but alſo to learn of him, Matth. xi. 29. Yea, and "if any man ſay that he is Chriſt's, let him walk even "as Chriſt walked," 1 John ii. 6. Your King is meek and patient, Iſa. liii. 7. as a lamb for meekneſs: ſhall his ſubjects be lions for fierceneſs? Your King was humble and lowly; Matth. xxi. 5. "Behold thy King cometh meek and lowly." Will you be proud and lofty? Doth this become the kingdom of Chriſt? Your

* *Regis ad exemplum omnis componitur orbis.* The whole world follow the example of the Prince.

Digitized by Google

King was a self-denying King; he could deny his outward comforts, ease, honour, life, to serve his Father's design, and accomplish your salvation, 2 Cor. viii. 9. Phil. ii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. Shall his servants be self-ended, and self-seeking persons, that will expose his honour, and hazard their own souls for the trifles of time? God forbid. Your King was painful, laborious, and diligent in fulfilling his work, John ix. 3. Let not his servants be lazy and slothful. O imitate your King, follow the pattern of your King: this will give you comfort now, and boldness in the day of judgment, if as he was, so ye are in this world, 1 John iv. 17.

SERMON XVII.

Of the Kingly Office of Christ, as it is providentially executed in the World, for the Redeemed.

EPH. i. 22.

And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church.

THE foregoing verses are spent in a thankful and humble adoration of the grace of God, in bringing the Ephesians to believe in Christ. This effect of that power that raised their hearts to believe in Christ, is here compared with that other glorious effect of it, even the raising of Christ himself from the dead: both these owe themselves to the same efficient cause. It raised Christ from a low estate, even from the dead, to a high, a very high and glorious state; to be the head both of the *world*, and of the *church*; the head of the world by way of dominion, the head of the church by way of union, and special influence, ruling the world for the good of his people in it. "He gave him to be the "head over all things to the church."

In this scripture let these four things be seriously regarded.

1. The dignity and authority committed to Christ; "He hath "put all things under his feet;" which implies, full, ample and absolute *dominion* in him, and *subjection* in them over whom he reigns. This power is delegated to him by the Father: for besides the *essential*, *native*, *ingenite* power and dominion over all, which he hath as God, and is common to every person in the Godhead, Psal. xxii. 28. there is a *mediatory dispensed* authority, which is proper to him as *Mediator*, which he receives as the reward or fruit of his suffering, Phil. ii. 8.

Digitized by Google

2. The ſubject recipient of this authority, which is Chriſt, and Chriſt *primarily*, and *only*: he is the πρωτον δεκτικον, firſt receptacle of all authority and power. Whatever authority any creature is clothed with, is but *miniſterial* and *derivative*, whether it be *political*, or *eccleſiaſtical*. Chriſt is the *only Lord*, Jude, ver. 4. The fountain of all power.

3. The *object* of this authority, the whole creation; *all things are put under his feet*: he rules from ſea to ſea, even to the utmoſt bounds of God's creation, "Thou haſt given him power over all "fleſh," John xvii. 2. all creatures, rational, and irrational, animate, and inanimate, angels, devils, men, winds, ſeas, all obey him.

4. And eſpecially, take notice of the *finis cui*, the end for which he governs and rules the univerſal empire; it is *for the church*, i. e. * for the advantage, comfort, and ſalvation of that choſen remnant he died for. He purchaſed the church; and that he might have the higheſt ſecurity that his blood ſhould not be loſt, God the Father hath put all things into his hand, to order and diſpoſe all as he pleaſeth. For the furtherance of that his deſign and end, as he bought the perſons of ſome, ſo the ſervices of all the reſt; and that they might effectually ſerve the end they are deſigned to, Chriſt will order them all in a bleſſed ſubordination and ſubſerviency thereunto. Hence the point is,

Doct. *That all the affairs of the kingdom of providence are ordered and determined by Jeſus Chriſt, for the ſpecial advantage, and everlaſting good of his redeemed people.*

John xvii. 2. "As thou haſt given him power over all fleſh, that "he ſhould give eternal life to as many as thou haſt given him." Hence it comes to paſs, that "all things work together for good "to them that love God, to them that are the called according to "his purpoſe," Rom. viii. 28.

That Jeſus Chriſt hath a providential influence upon all the affairs of this world is evident, both from *ſcripture aſſertions*, and *rational obſervations*, made upon the actings of things here below.

The firſt chapter of Ezekiel contains an admirable ſcheme or draught of providence. There you ſee how all the wheels, i. e. the motions and revolutions here on earth, are guided by the ſpirit that is in them. And, ver. 26. it is all run up into the ſupreme cauſe; there you find one like the Son of man, which is Jeſus Chriſt, ſitting upon the throne, and giving forth orders from thence for the government of all: and if it were not ſo, how is it that there are ſuch ſtrong combinations, and prediſpoſitions of

* He obtains this dominion for the good of his church. *Grotius in loc.*

Digitized by Google

persons and things to such ends and issues, without any communications of counsels, or holding of intelligence with one another? As in Israel's deliverance out of Egypt, and innumerable more instances have appeared. Certainly, if ten men, from several places, should all meet at one place, and about one business, without any fore-appointment among themselves, it would argue their motions were secretly over-ruled by some invisible agent. How is it that such marvellous effects are produced in the world by causes that carry no proportion to them? Amos v. 9. and 1 Cor. i. 27. and as often, the most apt and likely means are rendered wholly ineffectual? Psal. xxxiii. 16. In a word, if Christ hath no such providential influx, how are his people in all ages preserved in the midst of so many millions of potent and malicious enemies, amongst whom they live as sheep in the midst of wolves? Luke x. 3. How is it that the bush burns, and yet is not consumed? Exod. iii. 2.

But my business, in this discourse, is not to prove that there is a Providence, which none but Atheists deny. I shall chuse rather to shew by what acts Jesus Christ administers this kingdom, and in what manner; and what use may be made thereof.

First, He rules and orders the kingdom of Providence, by *supporting*, *permitting*, *restraining*, *limiting*, *protecting*, *punishing*, and *rewarding* those over whom he reigns providentially.

1. * He *supports* the world, and all creatures in it, by his power. "My Father works hitherto, and I work," John v. 17. "And in him (that is, in Christ) all things consist," Col. i. 17. It is a considerable part of Christ's glory to have a whole world of creatures owing their being and hourly conservations to him. The parts of the world are not coupled and fastened together as the parts of a house, whose beams are pinned and nailed to each other; but rather as several rings of iron, which hang together by the virtue of a loadstone. This goodly fabric was raised to the foundation when sin entered, and had tumbled into everlasting confusion, had not Christ stept in to shore up the reeling world. For the sake of his redeemed that inhabits it, he doth and will prop it by his omnipotent power. And when he hath gathered all his elect out of it into the kingdom above, then will he set fire to the four quarters of it, and it shall lie in ashes. Meanwhile, he

* The world is continued on account of the Church which is in it; otherwise the heaven and earth would be burnt up in one moment: because the whole world is not worth one grain of wheat: as it is indeed full of blasphemy and impiety, unless the Church supported the world by word and prayer, all things would be destroyed instantly. *Luther in Genesis* xxx.

Both the curse of the first covenant, and the blessing of the second, secure the continuation of the world, until God's purposes relating to the objects of both be accomplished in it. *Editor.*

Digitized by Google

is "given for a covenant to the people, to eſtabliſh the earth," Iſa. xlix. 8.

2. He *permits* and ſuffers the worſt of creatures in his dominion to be and act as they do. "The deceived, and the deceiver, are "his," Job. xii. 16. Even thoſe that fight againſt Chriſt and his people, receive both power and permiſſion from him. Say not, that it is unbecoming the moſt Holy to permit ſuch evils, which he could prevent if he pleaſed. For as he permits no more than he will over-rule to his praiſe, ſo that very permiſſion of his, is holy and juſt. Chriſt's working is not confounded with the creature's. Pure ſun-beams are not tainted by the noiſome vapours of the dunghill on which they ſhine. His holineſs hath no fellowſhip with their iniquities; nor are their tranſgreſſions at all excuſed by his permiſſions of them. "He is a rock, his work is per-"fect; *but* they have corrupted themſelves," Deut. xxxii. 4, 5. This holy permiſſion is but the withholding of thoſe reſtraints from their luſts, and denying thoſe common aſſiſtances which he is no way bound to give them. Acts xiv. 16. "He ſuffered all "nations to walk in their own ways." And yet ſhould he permit ſinful creatures to act out all the wickedneſs that is in their hearts, there would neither remain peace nor order in the world. And therefore,

3. He powerfully *reſtrains* creatures by the bridle of providence, from the commiſſion of thoſe things, to which their hearts are propenſe enough, Pſal. lxxvi. 10. "The remainder of wrath thou "wilt reſtrain," or * gird up; letting forth juſt ſo much as ſhall ſerve his holy ends, and no more. And truly this is one of the glorious myſteries of Providence, which amazes the ſerious and conſiderate ſoul; to ſee the ſpirit of a creature fully ſet to do miſchief; power enough, as one would think, in his hand to do it, and a door of opportunity ſtanding open for it; and yet the effect ſtrangely hindered. The ſtrong propenſions of the will are inwardly checked, as in the caſe of Laban, Gen. xxxi. 24. or a diverſion, and rub is ſtrangely caſt in their way; as in the caſe of Senacherib, 2 Kings xix. 7, 8. ſo that *their hands cannot perform their enterprizes*. Julian had two great deſigns before him, one was to conquer the Perſians, the other to root out the Galileans, as he, by way of contempt, called the Chriſtians: but he will begin with the Perſians firſt, and then make a ſacrifice of all the Chriſtians to his idols. He doth ſo, and periſhes in the firſt attempt. O the wiſdom of Providence!

4. Jeſus Chriſt *limits* the creatures in their acting, aſſigning them their boundaries and lines of liberty; to which they may, but be-

* חוגר *accinget.* Montanus.

Digitized by Google

yond it cannot, go. Rev. ii. 10. "Fear none of these things that "ye shall suffer; behold, the devil shall cast some of you into "prison, and ye shall have tribulation ten days." They would have cast them into their graves, but it shall only be into prisons: They would have stretched out their hands, upon them all: no, but only some of them shall be exposed: They would have kept them there perpetually; no, it must be but for ten days, Ezek. xxii. 6. "Behold, the princes of Israel were in thee, every one "to their power to shed blood." They went as far as they had *power* to go, not as far as they had *will* to go. Four hundred and thirty years were determined upon the people of God in Egypt; and then, *even in that very night*, God brought them forth; for then "the time of the promise was come," Acts vii. 17.

5. The Lord Jesus providentially *protects* his people amidst a world of enemies and dangers. It was Christ that appeared unto Moses in the flaming bush, and preserved it from being consumed. The bush signified the people of God in Egypt: the fire flaming on it, the exquisite sufferings they there endured: the safety of the bush, amidst the flames, the Lord's admirable care and protection of his poor suffering ones. None so tenderly careful as Christ. "As birds flying, so he defends Jerusalem." Isa. xxxi. 5. i. e. as they fly swiftly towards their nests, crying when their young are in danger, so will the Lord preserve his. They are "preserved in "Christ Jesus, Jude 1. as Noah and his family were in the ark. Hear how a Worthy of our own expresses himself on this point*.

"That we are at peace in our houses, at rest in our beds; that "we have any quiet in our enjoyments, is from hence alone: "Whose person would not be defiled, or destroyed? whose ha-"bitation would not be ruined? whose blood almost would not "be shed, if wicked men had power to perpetrate all their con-"ceived sin? It may be, the ruin of some of us hath been con-"ceived a thousand times. We are beholden to this Providence, "of obstructing sin, for our lives, our families, our estates, our "liberties, and whatsoever is or may be dear to us. For may we "not say sometimes with the Psalmist, Psal. lvii. 4. *My soul is "among lions, and I lie even among them that are set on fire, even the "sons of men, whose teeth are spears, and their tongue a sharp sword?* "And how is the deliverance of men contrived from such per-"sons? Psal. viii. 6. *God breaks their teeth in their mouths, even "the great teeth of the young lions.* He keeps this fire from burn-"ing,—some he cuts off and destroys: some he cuts short in their "power: some he deprives of the instruments whereby alone they "can work: some he prevents in their desired opportunities, or

* Dr Owen on Indwelling Sin.

Digitized by Google

" diverts by other objects for their lust; and oftentimes causeth " them to spend them among themselves, one upon another. We " may say, therefore, with the Psalmist, Psal. civ. 24. *O Lord,* " *how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all;* " *the earth is full of thy riches.*"

6. He *punishes* the evil doers, and repays, by providence into their own lap, the mischiefs they do, or but intend to do, unto them that fear him. Pharaoh, Senacherib, both the Julians, and innumerable more, are the lasting monuments of his righteous retribution. It is true, *a sinner may do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged;* but oft-times God hangs up some eminent sinners in chains, as spectacles and warnings to others. Many a heavy blow hath Providence given to the enemies of God, which they were never able to recover. Christ rules, and that with a rod of iron, in the midst of his enemies, Psal. cx. 2.

7. And lastly, He *rewards* by Providence the services done to him and his people. Out of this treasure of Providence God repays oftentimes those that serve him, and that with a hundred-fold reward now in this life, Matth. xix. 29. This active, vigilant Providence hath its eye upon all the wants, straits, and troubles of the creatures: but especially upon such as religion brings us unto. What huge volumes of experiences might the people of God write upon this subject? and what a pleasant history would it be, to read the strange, constant, wonderful, and unexpected actings of Providence, for them that have left themselves to its care?

Secondly, We shall next enquire how Jesus Christ administers this providential kingdom.

And here I must take notice of the means by which, and the manner in which he doth it. The means, or instruments, he uses in the governing the providential kingdom, (for he is not personally present with us himself), are either angels or men; " the an- " gels are ministring creatures, sent forth by him for the good of " them that shall be heirs of salvation," Heb. i. 14. Luther tells us, they have two offices, *superius canere, et inferius vigilare,* " to sing above, and watch beneath." These do us many invisible offices of love. They have dear and tender respects and love for the saints. To them, God, as it were, puts forth his children to nurse, and they are tenderly careful of them whilst they live, and bring them home in their arms to their Father when they die. And as angels, so men are the servants of Providence; yea, bad men as well as good. Cyrus, on that account, is called God's servant: they fulfil his will, whilst they are prosecuting their own lusts. " The earth shall help the woman," Rev. xii. 16. But good men delight to serve Providence; they and the angels are fellow-servants in one house, and to one master, Rev. xix. 10.

Digitized by Google

Yea, there is not a creature in heaven, earth, or hell, but Jesus Christ can providentially use it and serve his ends, and promote his designs by it. But whatever the instrument be Christ uses, of this we may be certain, that his providential working is holy, judicious, sovereign, profound, irresistible, harmonious, and to the saints peculiar.

1. It is holy. Though he permits, limits, orders and overrules many unholy persons and actions, yet he still works like himself, most holily and purely throughout. "The Lord is righte-"ous in all his ways, and holy in all his works, Psal. cxlv. 17. it is easier to separate light from a sun-beam, than holiness from the works of God. The best of men cannot escape sin in their most holy actions; they cannot touch, but are defiled. But no sin cleaves to God, whatever he hath to do about it.

2. Christ's providential working is not only most pure and holy, but also most wise and judicious. Ezek. i. 20. "The wheels are "full of eyes:" They are not moved by *a blind impetus**, but in deep counsel and wisdom. And, indeed, the wisdom of Providence manifests itself principally in the choice of such states for the people of God, as shall most effectually promote their eternal happiness. And herein it goes quite beyond our understandings and comprehensions. It makes that medicinal and salutiferous, which we judge as destructive to our comfort and good, as poison. I remember, it is a note of Suarez†, speaking of the felicity of the other world: "Then (saith he) the blessed shall see in God all things and cir-"cumstances pertaining to them, excellently accommodated and "attempered;" then shall they see that the crossing of their desires was the saving of their souls; and that otherwise they had perished. The most wise Providence looks beyond us. It eyes the end, and suits all things thereto, and not to our fond desires.

3. The providence of Christ is most supreme and sovereign. "Whatsoever he pleaseth, that he doth in heaven and in earth, "and in all places," Psal. cxxxv. 6. "He is Lord of lords, and "King of kings," Rev. xix. 16. The greatest monarchs on earth are but as little bits of clay‡, as the worms of the earth to him: they all depend on him, Prov. viii. 15, 16. "By me kings reign, "and princes decree justice: by me princes rule, nobles, even all "the judges of the earth."

* *Non cæco impetu volvuntur rotæ.*

† *Beatus in Deo videt res omnes accommodatas adse pertinentes, et omnes circumstantias accommodatas.* Suarez.

‡ His head, (Cant. v. 11.) gold of gold; which intimates the incomparable excellency of Christ's kingdom; gold on his head, is an ensign of royalty, of which crowns were made; therefore the expression, Gold of gold, seems to be of the same import with King of kings. *Brightman on Cant.*

Digitized by Google

4. Providence is profound and inſcrutable. The judgments of Chriſt are "a great deep, and his footſteps are not known, Pſal. xxxvi. 6. There are hard texts in the *works* as well as in the *words of Chriſt.* The wiſeſt heads have been at a loſs in interpreting ſome Providences, Jer. xii. 1, 2. Job xxi. 7. The angels had the hands of a man under their wings, Ezek. i. 8. i. e. they wrought ſecretly and myſteriouſly.

5. Providence is irreſiſtible in its deſigns and motions; for all providences are but fulfillings and accompliſhments of God's immutable decrees. Eph. i. 11. "He works all things according to "the counſel of his own will." * Hence Zech. vi. 1. the inſtruments by which God executed his wrath, are called "chariots "coming from betwixt two mountains of braſs," i. e. † "the "firm and immutable decrees of God." When the Jews put Chriſt to death, they did but do what "the hand and counſel of "God had before determined to be done," Acts iv. 28. ſo that none can oppoſe or reſiſt providence. "I will work, and who "ſhall let it?" Iſa. xliii. 13.

6. The providences of Chriſt are *harmonious.* There are ſecret chains, and inviſible connections betwixt the works of Chriſt. We know not how to reconcile promiſes and providences together, nor yet providences one with another; but certainly they all *work together,* Rom. viii. 28. as adjuvant cauſes, or con-cauſes ſtanding under, and working by the influence of the firſt cauſe. He doth not do, and undo; deſtroy by one providence, what he built by another. But, look, as all ſeaſons of the year, the nipping froſts, as well as halcyon days of ſummer, do all conſpire and conduce to the harveſt; ſo it is in providence.

7. And laſtly, The providences of Chriſt *work in a ſpecial and peculiar way, for the good of the ſaints.* His providential is ſubordinated to his ſpiritual kingdom. "He is the Saviour of all men, "eſpecially of them that believe," 1 Tim. iv. 1. Theſe only have the bleſſings of providence. Things are ſo laid and ordered, as that their eternal good ſhall be promoted and ſecured by all that Chriſt doth.

Inference 1. If ſo, *See then, in the firſt place, to whom you are beholden for your lives, liberties, comforts, and all that you enjoy in this world.* Is it not Chriſt that orders all for you? He is, indeed, in heaven, out of your ſight; but though you ſee him not, he ſees you, and takes care of all your concerns. When one told Silentiarius of a plot laid to take away his life, he anſwered, *Si Deus mei curam non habet, quid vivo?* "If God take no care of me, how

* By mountains he underſtands the hidden counſels of God. *Calvin.*
† *Firmiſſima et inſcrutabilia Dei conſilia.* Druſius.

Digitized by Google

" do I live?" how have I escaped hitherto? " In all thy ways ac-" knowledge him," Prov. iii. 6. It is he that hath espied out that state thou art in, as most proper for thee. It is Christ that doth all for you that is done. He looks down from heaven upon all that fear him; he sees when you are in danger by temptation, and casts in a providence, you know not how, to hinder it. He sees when you are sad, and orders reviving providences, to refresh you. He sees when corruptions prevail, and orders humbling providences to purge them. Whatever mercies you have received, all along the way you have gone hitherto, are the orderings of Christ for you. And you should carefully observe how the promises and providences have kept equal pace with one another, and both gone step by step with you until now.

Inf. 2. Hath God left the government of the whole world in the hands of Christ, and trusted him over all? *Then do you also leave all your particular concerns in the hands of Christ too, and know that the infinite wisdom and love, which rules the world, manages every thing that relates to you.* It is in a good hand, and infinitely better than if it were in your own. I remember when * Melanchton was under some despondencies of spirit about the estate of God's people in Germany, Luther chides him thus for it, " Let Philip " cease to rule the world." It is none of our work to steer the course of providence, or direct its motions, but to submit quietly to him that doth. There is an itch in men, yea, in the best of men, to be disputing with God: " Let me talk with thee of thy " judgment," saith Jeremiah, chap. xii. 1, 2. Yea, how apt are we to regret at providences, as if they had no conducency at all to the glory of God, or to our good, Exod. v. 22. yea, to limit providence to our way and time? Thus, the " Israelites tempted " God, and limited the holy One," Psal. lxxviii. 18, 41. How often also do we, unbelievingly, distrust providence as though it could never accomplish what we profess to expect and believe? Ezek. xxxvii. 11. " Our bones are dry, our hope is lost; we are " cut off for our part." So Gen. xviii. 13, 14. Isa. xl. 17. There are but few Abrahams among believers, who " against hope, believed in hope, " giving glory to God," Rom. iv. 20. And it is but too common for good men to repine and fret at providence, when their wills, lusts, or humours are crossed by it: this was the great sin of Jonah. Brethren, these things ought not to be so; did you but seriously consider, either the design of providence, which is to bring about the gracious designs and purposes of God upon you, which were laid before this world was, Eph. i. 11. or that it is *a lifting up of thy wisdom* against his, as if thou couldst bet-

* *Monendus est Philippus ut desinat esse rector mundi.* Melch. Adam.

Digitized by Google

ter order thine affairs, if thou hadst but the conduct and management of them; or that you *have to do herein with a great and dreadful God*, in whose hands you are as the clay in the potter's hands, that he may do what he will with you, and all that is yours, without giving you an account of any of his matters, Job xxxiii. 13. or whither providence hath cast others, as good, by nature, as yourselves, tumbled them down from the top of health, wealth, honours and pleasures, to the bottom of hell; or, lastly, did you but consider how often it hath formerly baffled and befooled yourselves; you would retract, with shame, your rash, headlong censures of it, and enforce you, by the sight of its births and issues, to confess your folly and ignorance, as Asaph did, Psal. lxxiii. 22. I say, if such considerations as these could but have place with you in your troubles and temptations, they would quickly mould your hearts into a better and more quiet frame.

O that I could but persuade you to resign all to Christ. He is a cunning workman *, as he is called, Prov. viii. 30. and can effect what he pleaseth. It is a good rule, *De operibus Dei non est judicandum, ante quintum actum.* "Let God work out all that he "intends, but have patience till he hath put the last hand to his "work, and then find fault with it, if you can." You have heard of the patience of Job, "and have seen the end of the Lord," James v. 11.

Inf. 3. If Christ be Lord and king over the providential kingdom, and that, for the good of his people, *let none that are Christ's, henceforth, stand in a slavish fear of creatures.* It is a good note that † Grotius hath upon my text; "It is a marvellous consolation "(saith he) that Christ hath so great an empire, and that he go-"verns it for the good of his people, as a head consulting the good "of the body." Our head and husband, is Lord-general of all the hosts of heaven and earth; no creature can move hand or tongue without his leave or order: the power they have is given them from above, John xix. 11, 12. The serious consideration of this truth will make the feebleſt spirit cease trembling, and set it a singing; Psal. xlvii. 7. "The Lord is king of all the earth, "sing ye praises with understanding:" that is, (as some well paraphrase it) every one that hath understanding of this comfortable truth. Hath he not given you abundant security in many expres promises, that all shall issue well for you that fear him? Rom. viii. 28. "All things shall work together for good, to them that "love God," And Eccl. viii. 12. verily "it shall be well with

* It has two significations: An experienced artificer or workman, and a workman excelling in his art. *Glass.*

† *Magna consolatio, quod tantum imperium habet is, qui id exercet ecclesiæ bono, sicut caput consulit corpori.* Grotius.

Digitized by Google

"them that fear God," even with them that *fear before him.* And suppose he had not, yet the very understanding of our relation to such a king, should, in itself, be sufficient security: for, he is the * universal † supreme, ‡ absolute, ‖ meek, merciful, § victorious, and ¶ immortal king.

He sits in glory, at the Father's right hand; and, to make his seat the easier, his enemies are a footstool for him.† His love to his people is unspeakably tender and fervent, he that touches them, "touches the apple of his eye." Zech. ii. And, it is hardly imaginable, that Jesus Christ will sit still, and suffer his enemies to thurst out his eyes. Till this be forgotten, the wrath of man is not feared; Isa. li. 12, 13. "He that fears a man that "shall die, forgets the Lord his Maker." He loves you too well to sign any order to your prejudice, and without his order, none can touch you.

Inf. 4. If the government of the world be in the hands of Christ, *then our engaging and entitling of Christ to all our affairs and business, is the true and ready way to their success and prosperity.* If all depend upon his pleasure, then sure it is your wisdom to take him along with you to every action and business; it is no lost time that is spent in prayer, wherein we ask his leave, and beg his presence with us: and, take it for a clear truth, that which is not *prefaced* with *prayer*, will be *followed* with *trouble.* How easily can Jesus Christ dash all your designs, when they are at the very birth and article of execution, and break off, in a moment, all the purposes of your hearts? It is a proverb among the Papists, that *Mass and meat hinder no man.* The Turks will pray five times a day, how urgent soever their business be. Blush you that enterprize your affairs without God: I reckon that business as good as done, to which we have got Christ's leave, and engaged his presence to accompany us.

Inf. 5. Lastly, *Eye Christ in all the events of providence; see his hand in all that befals you, whether it be evil or good.* "The works "of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure "therein," Psal. cxi. 2.

How much good might we get, by observation of the good or evil that befals us throughout our course!

1. *In all the evils of trouble and afflictions that befal you, eye Jesus Christ:* and set your hearts to the study of these four things in affliction.

(1.) Study *his sovereignty and dominion;* for he creates and forms

---

* Psal. ii. 8. † Prov. viii. 15. ‡ Rev. i. 18. ‖ Matth. xxi. 5.
§ Psal. xlv. 4. ¶ 1 Tim. i. 17.

† See my Saint indeed.

Digitized by Google

them: they rise not out of the dust, nor do they befal you casually; but he raises them up, and gives them their commission, Jer. xviii. 11. "Behold, I create evil, and devise a device against "you." He elects the instrument of your trouble; he makes the rod as afflictive as he pleaseth; he orders the continuance and end of your troubles; and they will not cease to be afflictive to you, till Christ say, Leave off, it is enough. The Centurion wisely considered this, when he told him, Luke vii. 8. "I have soldiers "under me, and I say to one, Go, and he goeth; to another, "Come, and he cometh:" meaning, that as his soldiers were at his beck and command, so diseases were at Christ's beck, to come and go as he ordered them.

(2.) *Study the wisdom of Christ in the contrivance of your troubles.* And his wisdom shines out many ways in them: it is evident in chusing such *kinds* of trouble for you: this, and not that, because this is more apt to work upon, and purge out the corruption that most predominates in you: In the *degrees* of your troubles, suffering them to work to such a height, else not reach their end; but no higher, lest they overwhelm you.

(3.) *Study the tenderness and compassions of Christ over his afflicted.* O think if the devil had but the mixing of my cup, how much more bitter would he make it! There would not be one drop of mercy, no, not of sparing mercy in it, which is the lowest of all sorts of mercy: but here is much mercy mixed with my troubles; there is mercy in this, that it is no worse. Am I afflicted? "It is of the Lord's mercy I am not consumed," Lam. iii. 2. It might have been hell as well as this; there is mercy in his supports under it. Others have, and I might have been left to sink and perish under my burdens. *Mercy*, in deliverance out of it; this might have been everlasting darkness, that should never have had a morning. O the tenderness of Christ over his afflicted!

(4.) *Study the love of Christ to thy soul, in affliction.* Did he not love thee, he would not sanctify a rod to humble or reduce thee, but let thee alone to perish in thy sin. Rev. iii. 19. "Whom I "love, I rebuke and chasten." This is the device of love, to recover thee to thy God, and prevent thy ruin. O what an advantage would it be thus to study Christ, in all your evils that befal you!

2. *Eye and study Christ in all the good you receive from the hand of providence.* Turn both sides of your mercies, and view them in all their lovely circumstances.

(1.) *Eye them in their suitableness;* how conveniently providence hath ordered all things for thee. Thou hast a narrow heart, and a small estate suitable to it: Hadst thou more of the world, it

Digitized by Google

would be like a large ſail to a little boat, which would quickly pull thee under water: thou haſt that which is moſt ſuitable to thee of all conditions.

(2.) *Eye the ſeaſonableneſs of thy mercies, how they are timed to an hour.* Providence brings forth all its fruits in due ſeaſon.

(3.) *Eye the peculiar nature of thy mercies.* Others have common, thou ſpecial ones; others have but a ſingle, thou a double ſweetneſs in thy enjoyments, one natural from the matter of it, another ſpiritual from the way in which, and end for which it comes.

(4.) *Obſerve the order in which providence ſends your mercies.* See how one is linked ſtrangely to another, and is a door to let in many. Sometimes one mercy is introductive to a thouſand.

(5.) And laſtly, *Obſerve the conſtancy of them,* "they are new "every morning," Lam. iii. 23. How aſſiduouſly doth God viſit thy ſoul and body! Think with thy ſelf, if there be but a ſuſpenſion of the care of Chriſt for one hour, that hour would be thy ruin. Thouſands of evils ſtand round about thee, watching when Chriſt will but remove his eye from thee, that they may ruſh in and devour thee.

Could we thus ſtudy the providence of Chriſt in all the good and evil that befals us in the world, then in every ſtate we ſhould be content, Phil. iv. 11. Then we ſhould never be ſtopt, but furthered in our way by all that falls out; then would our experience ſwell to great volumes, which we might carry to heaven with us; and then ſhould we anſwer all Chriſt's ends in every ſtate he brings us into. Do this, and ſay,

Thanks be to God for Jeſus Chriſt.

SERMON XVIII.

Of the Neceſſity of Chriſt's Humiliation, in order to the Execution of all theſe his bleſſed Offices for us; and particularly of his Humiliation by Incarnation.

PHIL. ii. 8.

And being found in faſhion as a man, he humbled himſelf, and became obedient to death, even the death of the croſs.

YOU have heard how Chriſt was inveſted with the offices of prophet, prieſt, and king, for the carrying on the bleſſed deſign of our redemption; the execution of theſe offices neceſſarily required that he ſhould be both deeply *abaſed,* and highly *exalted.* He cannot, as our *Prieſt,* offer up himſelf a ſacrifice to God for us,

Digitized by Google

except he be humbled, and humbled to death. He cannot, as a *King*, powerfully apply the virtue of that his ſacrifice, except he be exalted, yea, highly exalted. Had he not ſtooped to the low eſtate of a man, he had not, as a *Prieſt*, had a ſacrifice of his own to offer; as a *Prophet*, he had not been fit to teach us the will of God, ſo as that we ſhould be able to bear it; as a *King*, he had not been a ſuitable head to the church: and, had he not been highly exalted, that ſacrifice had not been carried within the vail before the Lord. Thoſe diſcoveries of God could not have been *univerſal*, *effectual* and *abiding*. The government of Chriſt could not have ſecured, protected, and defended the ſubjects of his kingdom.

The infinite wiſdom proſpecting all this, ordered that Chriſt ſhould firſt be deeply humbled, then highly exalted: both which ſtates of Chriſt are preſented to us by the apoſtle in this context.

He that intends to build high, lays the foundation deep and low. Chriſt muſt have a diſtinct glory in heaven, tranſcending that of angels and men, (for the ſaints will know him from all others by his glory, as the ſun is known from the leſſer ſtars). And, as he muſt be exalted infinitely above them, ſo he muſt firſt, in order thereunto, be humbled and abaſed as much below them: "His form was marred more than any man's; and his "viſage more than the ſons of men." The ground colours are a deep ſable, which afterwards are laid on with all the ſplendour and glory of heaven.

Method requires that we firſt ſpeak to this ſtate of *Humiliation*.

And, to that purpoſe, I have read this ſcripture to you, which preſents you the Son under an (almoſt) total eclipſe. He that was beautiful and glorious, Iſa. iv. 2. yea, glorious as the only begotten of the Father, John i. 14. yea, * *the glory*, James ii. 1. yea, the ſplendour and "brightneſs of the Father's glory," Heb. i. 3. was ſo vailed, clouded, and debaſed, that he looked not like himſelf; a God, no, nor ſcarce as a man; for, with reference to this humbled ſtate, it is ſaid, Pſal. xxii. 6. "I am a worm, and no "man:" q. d. rather write me *worm*, than *man*: I am become an *abject* among men†, as that word, Iſa. liii. 3. ſignifies. This humiliation of Chriſt we have here expreſſed, in the *nature*, *degrees*, and *duration* or continuance of it.

1. The nature of it, ταπεινωσεν ἑαυτον, he humbled himſelf.

* The Hebrew words לצבי ולכבוד in Iſa. iv. 2. literally, ſignify, *for beauty and for glory*. The words Ιησυ Χριστε της δοξης, in James ii. 1. ſignify, *Jeſus Chriſt, the glory*; and απαυγασμα της δοξης, *the brightneſs of glory*.

† The ſcorn of men, an abject among men.

Digitized by Google

1. The word imports both a *real* and *voluntary* abaſement*. *Real;* he did not perſonate a humbled man, nor act the part of one, in a debaſed ſtate, but was really, and indeed humbled; and that not only before men, but God. As man, he was humbled really, as God in reſpect of his manifeſtative glory: and, as it was real, ſo alſo *voluntary:* † It is not ſaid he was humbled, but *he humbled himſelf:* he was willing to ſtoop to this low and abject ſtate for us. And, indeed, the voluntarineſs of his humiliation made it moſt acceptable to God, and ſingularly commends the love of Chriſt to us, that he would chuſe to ſtoop to all this ignominy, ſuffering, and abaſement for us.

2. The degrees of his humiliation; it was not only ſo low as to become a man, a man under law; but he humbled himſelf to become "obedient to death, even the death of the croſs." Here you ſee the depth of Chriſt's humiliation, both *ſpecified*, it was unto *death*, and *aggravated*, even the death of the croſs: not only to become a man but a dead corps, and that too hanging on a tree, dying the death of a malefactor.

3. The duration, or continuance of this his humiliation: it continued from the firſt moment of his *incarnation*, to the very moment of his *vivification* and quickening in the grave. So the terms of it are fixed here by the apoſtle; from the time he was found in faſhion as a man, that is, from his incarnation, unto his death on the croſs, which alſo comprehends the time of his abode in the grave; ſo long his humiliation laſted. Hence the obſervation is,

Doct. *That the ſtate of Chriſt, from his conception to his reſurrection, was a ſtate of deep abaſement and humiliation.*

We are now entering upon Chriſt's humbled ſtate, which I ſhall caſt under three general heads, viz. his humiliation, in his *incarnation*, in his *life*, and in his *death*. My preſent work is to open Chriſt's humiliation, in his incarnation, imported in theſe words, *He was found in faſhion as a man.* By which you are not to conceive that he only aſſumed a body, as an aſſiſting form, to appear tranſiently to us in it, and ſo lay it down again. ‡ It is not ſuch an apparition of Chriſt in the ſhape of a man, that is here intend-

* But he ſpeaks not of a feigned and counterfeit, but of a true and real humiliation. *Zanch. in loc.*

† He was not humbled by another, like the fallen angels who were by God thrown headlong into the infernal pit. *Ibid.*

‡ In theſe few words he confirms the things he had ſaid before of the true nature of man (which he calls *the form of a ſervant*) aſſumed by the Son of God into unity of perſon, by which he was made like to men in all things, ſin excepted. *Zanch.*

Digitized by Google

ed; but his true and real assumption of our nature, which was a special part of his humiliation; as will appear by the following particulars.

1. The *incarnation* of Christ was a most wonderful humiliation of him, inasmuch as thereby he is brought into the rank and order of creatures, who is over all, "God blessed for ever," Rom. ix. 5. This is the astonishing mystery, 1 Tim. iii. 16. that God should be manifest in the flesh; that the eternal God should truly and properly be called the MAN Christ Jesus, 1 Tim. ii. 5. It was a wonder to Solomon, that God would dwell in that stately and magnificent temple at Jerusalem, 2 Chron. vi. 18. "But will "God in very deed dwell with men on earth! Behold the hea-"ven, and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much "less this house which I have built?" But it is a far greater wonder, that God should dwell in a body of flesh, and pitch his tabernacle with us, John i. 14. It would have seemed, a rude blasphemy, had not the scriptures plainly revealed it, to have thought, or spoken of the eternal God, as born in time; the world's Creator as a creature; the Ancient of Days, as an infant of days.

The Heathen Chaldeans told the king of Babel, that the "dwel-"ling of the gods is not with flesh," Dan. ii. 11. But now God not only dwells with flesh, but dwells in flesh; yea, was made flesh, and dwelt among us.

For the sun to fall from its sphere, and be degraded into a wandering atom; for an angel to be turned out of heaven, and be converted into a silly fly or worm, had been no such great abasement; for they were but creatures before, and so they would abide still, though in an inferior order or species of creatures. The distance betwixt the highest and lowest species of creatures, is but a finite distance. The angel and the worm dwell not so far asunder. But for the infinite glorious Creator of all things, to become a creature, is a mystery exceeding all human understanding. The distance betwixt God and the highest order of creatures, is an infinite distance. He is said to *humble himself, to behold the things that are done in heaven.* What a humiliation then is it, to behold the things in the lower world! but to be born into it, and become a man! Great indeed is the mystery of godliness. "Behold, (saith "the prophet, Isa. xl. 15, 18.) the nations are as the drop of a "bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance; he "taketh up the isles as a very little thing. All nations before "him are as nothing, and they are accounted to him less than no-"thing, and vanity." If, indeed, this great and incomprehensible Majesty will himself stoop to the state and condition of a creature, we may easily believe, that being once a creature, he would expose himself to hunger, thirst, shame, spitting, death, or any thing but

Digitized by Google

ſin. For that once being a man, he ſhould endure any of theſe things, is not ſo wonderful, as that he ſhould become a man. This was the low ſtep, a deep abaſement indeed!

2. It was a marvellous humiliation to the Son of God, not only to become a creature, but an inferior creature, a man, and not an angel. Had he taken the angelical nature, though it had been a wonderful abaſement to him, yet he had ſtaid (if I may ſo ſpeak) nearer his own home, and been ſomewhat liker to a God, than now he appeared, when he dwelt with us: for angels are the higheſt, and moſt excellent of all created beings: For their *nature*, they are pure *ſpirits*; for their *wiſdom*, *intelligences*; for their dignity, they are called *principalities and powers*; for their *habitations*, they are ſtiled the *heavenly hoſt*; and for their *employment*, it is to *behold the face of God in heaven*. The higheſt pitch, both of our holineſs and happineſs, in the coming world, is expreſſed by this, we ſhall be ισαγγελοι, "equal to the angels," Luke xx. 36. As man is nothing to God, ſo he is much inferior to the angels; ſo much below them, that he is not able to bear the ſight of an angel, though in a human ſhape, rendering himſelf as familiarly as may be to him, Judges xiii. 22. When the Pſalmiſt had contemplated the heavens, and viewed the celeſtial bodies, the glorious luminaries, the moon and ſtars which God had made, he cries out, Pſal. viii. 5. "What is man, that thou art mindful of him, or the ſon of "man that thou viſiteſt him!" Take man at his beſt when he came a perfect and pure piece out of his Maker's hand, in the ſtate of innocency: yet he was inferior to angels. They always bare the image of God, in a more eminent degree than man, as being wholly ſpiritual ſubſtances, and ſo more lively repreſenting God, than man could do, whoſe noble ſoul is immers'd in matter, and cloſed up in fleſh and blood: yet Chriſt chuſeth this inferior order and ſpecies of creatures, and paſſeth by the angelical nature; Heb. ii. 16. "He took not on him the nature of angels, but the ſeed of Abraham."

3. Moreover, Jeſus Chriſt did not only neglect the angelical, and aſſume the human nature; but he alſo aſſumed the human nature, after ſin had blotted the original glory of it, and withered up the beauty and excellency thereof. For he came not in our nature before the fall, whilſt as yet its glory was freſh in it; but he came, as the apoſtle ſpeaks, Rom. viii. 3. "In the likeneſs of "ſinful fleſh," i. e. in fleſh that had the marks, and miſerable effects, and conſequents of ſin upon it. I ſay not that Chriſt aſſumed ſinful fleſh, or fleſh really defiled by ſin. That which was born of the Virgin was a holy thing. For by the power of the Higheſt (whether by the energetical command and ordination of the Holy Ghoſt, as ſome; or by his benediction and bleſſing, I

Digitized by Google

here diſpute not) that whereof the body of Chriſt was to be formed, was ſo ſanctified, that no taint or ſpot of original pollution remained in it. But yet though it had not intrinſical native uncleanneſs in it, it had the effects of ſin upon it; yea, it was attended with the whole troop of human infirmities, that ſin at firſt let into our common nature, ſuch as, hunger, thirſt, wearineſs, pain, mortality, and all theſe natural weakneſſes and evils that clog our miſerable natures, and make them groan from day to day under them.

By reaſon whereof, though he was not a ſinner, yet he looked like one: and they that ſaw and converſed with him, took him for a ſinner; ſeeing all theſe effects of ſin upon him. In theſe things he came as near to ſin as his holineſs could admit. O what a ſtoop was this! to be made in the likeneſs of fleſh, though the innocent fleſh of Adam, had been much; but to be made in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh, the fleſh of ſinners, rebels; fleſh, though not *defiled*, yet miſerably *defaced* by ſin! O what is this! and who can declare it! And indeed, if he will be a Mediator of reconciliation, it was neceſſary it ſhould be ſo. It behoved him to aſſume the ſame nature that ſinned, to make ſatisfaction in it. Yea, theſe ſinleſs infirmities were neceſſary to be aſſumed with the nature, foraſmuch as his bearing them was a part of his humiliation, and went to make up ſatisfaction for us. Moreover, by them our High-prieſt was qualified from his own experience, and filled with tender compaſſion to us.

But O the admirable condeſcenſions of a Saviour, to take ſuch a nature! to put on ſuch a garment when ſo very mean and ragged! Did this become the Son of God to wear? O grace unſearchable!

4. And yet more, by this his incarnation he was greatly humbled, inaſmuch as this ſo vailed, clouded, and diſguiſed him, that during the time he lived here he looked not like himſelf, as God; but as a poor, ſorry, contemptible ſinner, in the eyes of the world; they ſcorned him. *This fellow ſaid*, Matth. xxvi. 61. Hereby "he made himſelf of no reputation," Phil. ii. 6. It blotted his honour and reputation. By reaſon hereof he loſt all eſteem and honour from thoſe that ſaw him, Matth. xiii. 55. "Is not this the carpenter's ſon?" To ſee a poor man travelling up and down the country, in hunger, thirſt, wearineſs, attended with a company of poor men; one of his company bearing the bag, and that which was put therein, John xiii. 29. Who that had ſeen him, would ever have thought this had been the Creator of the world, the Prince of the kings of the earth? "He was deſ-"piſed, and we eſteemed him not." Now which of you is there that would not rather chuſe to endure much miſery as a man, than to be degraded into a contemptible worm, that every body treads

Digitized by Google

upon, and no man regards it? Christ looked so unlike a God in this habit, that he was scarce allowed the name of a man; a *worm* rather than a *man*.

And think with yourselves now, was not this astonishing self-denial? That he, who from eternity, had his Father's smiles and honours; he that from the creation was adored, and worshipped by angels, as their God, must now become a footstool for every miscreant to tread on; and not to have the respects due to a man; sure this was a deep abasement. It was a black cloud that for so many years darkened, and shut up his manifestative glory, that it could not shine out to the world; only some weak rays of the Godhead shone to some few eyes, through the chinks of his humanity; as the clouded sun sometimes opens a little, and casts some faint beams, and is muffled up again. "We saw his glory, "as of the only begotten Son:" but the world knew him not, John i. 14. If a prince walk up and down in a disguise, he must expect no more honour than a mean subject. This was the case of our Lord Jesus Christ, this disguise made him contemptible, and an object of scorn.

5. Again, Christ was greatly humbled by his incarnation, inasmuch as thereby he was put at a distance from his Father, and that ineffable joy and pleasure he eternally had with him. Think not, reader, but the Lord Jesus lived at a high and unimitable rate of communion with God while he walked here in the flesh: but yet to live by faith, as Christ here did, is one thing; and to be in the bosom of God, as he was before, is another. To have the ineffable delights of God perpetuated and continued to him, without one moment's interruption from eternity, is one thing; and to have his soul sometimes filled with the joy of the Lord, and then all overcast with clouds of wrath again; to cry, and God not hear, as he complains, Psal. xxxii. 2. nay, to be reduced to such a low ebb of spiritual comforts, as to be forced to cry out so bitterly, as he did, Psal. xxii. 1. "My God, my God, why hast "thou forsaken me?" This was a thing Christ was very unacquainted with, till he was found in habit as a man.

6. And lastly, It was a great stoop and condescension of Christ if he would become a man, to take his nature from such obscure parents, and chuse such a low and contemptible state in this world as he did. He will be born, but not of the blood of nobles, but of a poor woman in Israel, espoused to a carpenter: yea, and that too, under all the disadvantages imaginable; not in his mother's house, but an inn; yea, in the stable too. He suited all to that abased state he was designed for; and came among us under all the humbling circumstances imaginable: "You know the grace of "our Lord Jesus Christ, (saith the apostle) how that though he

Digitized by Google

" was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor," 2 Cor. viii. 9. And thus I have shewn you some few particulars of Christ's humiliation in his incarnation. Next we shall infer some things from it that are practical.

Inference 1. *Hence we gather the fulness and completeness of Christ's satisfaction, as the sweet first-fruits of his incarnation.* Did man offend and violate the law of God? Behold, God himself is become man to repair that breach, and satisfy for the wrong done. The highest honour that ever the law of God received, was to have such a person as the man Christ Jesus is, to stand before its bar, and make reparation to it. This is more than if it had poured out all our blood, and built up its honour upon the ruins of the whole creation.

It is not so much to see all the stars in heaven overcast, as to see one sun eclipsed. The greater Christ was, the greater was his humiliation; and the greater his humiliation was, the more full and complete was his satisfaction; and the more completeness there is in Christ's satisfaction, the more perfect and steady is the believer's consolation. If he had not stooped so low, our joy and comfort could not be exalted so high. The depth of the foundation is the strength of the superstructure.

Inf. 2. *Did Christ for our sakes stoop from the majesty, glory and dignity he was possessed of in heaven, to the mean and contemptible state of a man? What a pattern of self-denial is here presented to Christians?* What objection against, or excuses to shift off this duty, can remain, after such an example as is here propounded? Brethren, let me tell you, the *pagan* world was never acquainted with such an argument as this, to press them to self-denial. Did Christ stoop, and cannot you stoop? did Christ stoop so much, and cannot you stoop in the least? Was he content to become any thing, a worm, a reproach, a curse; and cannot you digest any abasements? Do the least slights and neglects rankle your hearts, and poison them with discontent, malice and revenge? O how unlike Christ are you! Hear; and blush in hearing, what your Lord saith in John xiii. 14. " If I then, your Lord and Master, wash your feet; ye " ought also to wash one another's feet." " The example obliges " not, (as * a learned man well observes) to the same individual " act, but it obliges us to follow the reason of the example;" *i. e.* after Christ's example, we must be ready to perform the lowest and meanest offices of love and service to one another. And indeed to this it obliges most forcibly; for it is as if a master, seeing a proud, sturdy servant, that grudges at the work he is em-

* *Obligat nos ad rationem exempli, magis quam ad individuum actum.* Chamier. Tom. 3. l. 19. c. 7.

Digitized by Google

ployed about, as if it were too mean and base, should come and take it out of his hand; and when he has done it, should say, doth your Lord and Master think it not beneath him to do it; and is it beneath you? I remember it is an excellent saying that * Bernard hath upon the nativity of Christ; saith he, "What more "detestable, what more unworthy, or what deserves severer "punishment, than for a poor man to magnify himself, after he "hath seen the great and high God, so humbled, as to become a "little child? It is intolerable impudence for a worm to swell with "pride, after it hath seen majesty emptying itself; to see one so "infinitely above us, to stoop so far beneath us." O how convincing and shaming should it be! Ah how opposite should pride and stoutness be to the spirit of a Christian! I am sure nothing is more so to the spirit of Christ. Your Saviour was lowly, meek, self-denying, and of a most condescending spirit; he looked not at his own things, but yours, Phil. ii. 4. And doth it become you to be proud, selfish, and stout? I remember Jerom, in his epistle to Pamachius, a godly young nobleman, advised him to be eyes to the blind, feet to the lame; yea, saith he, if need be, I would not have you refuse to cut wood, and draw water for the saints: And what, saith he, is this to buffeting and spitting upon, to crowning with thorns, scourging and dying! Christ did undergo all this, and that for the ungodly.

Inf. 3. *Did Christ stoop so low as to become a man to save us? Then those that perish under the gospel, must needs perish without apology.* What would you have Christ do more to save you? Lo, he hath laid aside the robes of majesty and glory, put on your own garments of flesh, come down from his throne, and brought salvation home to your own doors. Surely, the lower Christ stooped to save us, the lower we shall sink under wrath that neglect so great salvation. The Lord Jesus is brought low, but the unbeliever will lay him yet lower, even under his feet; he will tread the Son of God under foot, Heb. x. 28. For such (as the apostle there speaks) is reserved something worse than dying without mercy. What pleas and excuses others will make at the judgment-seat, I know not; but once, it is evident; you will be speechless. And, as † one well observes, the vilest sinners among the Gentiles, nay, the devils themselves, will have more to say for themselves than you.

I must be plain with you; I beseech you consider, how Jews, Pagans, and Devils will rise up in judgment against you. The

* *Quid magis indignum, quid detestandum amplius, quid gravius puniendum, quam ut videns Deum parvulum factum, homo se magnificet? Intolerabilis est impudentia, ut ubi sese exinanivit majestas, vermiculus infletur, et intumescat.* Bern. Serm. 1. de Nativ.

† *Vide* Morning Exercise at St Giles's in the Fields, p. 256.

Digitized by Google

Jew may ſay, I had a legal yoke upon me, which neither I nor my fathers were able to bear; Chriſt invited me only into the garden of nuts, where I might ſooner break my teeth with the hard ſhells of ceremonies, than get the kernel of goſpel-promiſes.—In the beſt of our ſacrifices, the ſmoke filled our temple; ſmoke only to provoke us to weep for a clearer manifeſtation. We had but the old edition of the covenant of grace, in a character very darkly intelligible: You have the laſt edition, with a commentary of our *rejection*, and the world's *reception*, and the Spirit's *effuſion*. You had all that heart could wiſh.—I periſh eternally, may the poor Pagan ſay, without all poſſibility of reconciliation, and have only ſinned againſt the covenant of works; having never heard of a goſpel-covenant, nor of reconciliation by a Mediator. O had I but heard one ſermon! had Chriſt but once broke in upon my ſoul, to convince me of my undone condition, and to have ſhewn a righteouſneſs to me! But wo is me! I never had ſo much as one offer of Chriſt.—But ſo have I, muſt you ſay that refuſe the goſpel: I have, or might have heard thouſands of ſermons; I could ſcarce eſcape hearing one or other ſhewing me the danger of my ſin, and my neceſſity of Chriſt. But notwithſtanding all I heard, I wilfully reſolved I would have nothing to do with him. I could not endure to hear ſtrictneſs preſſed upon me: it was all the hell I had upon earth, that I could not ſin in quiet.—Nay, may the Devil himſelf ſay, it is true, I was ever ſince my fall maliciouſly ſet againſt God. But alas! as ſoon as I had ſinned, God threw me out of heaven, and told me he would never have mercy upon me: and though I lived in the time of all manner of gracious diſpenſations, I ſaw ſacrifices offered, and Chriſt in the fleſh, and the goſpel preached; yet how could all this chuſe but enrage me the more, to have God, as it were, ſay, Look here, Satan, I have provided a remedy for ſin, but none for thine! This ſet me upon revenge againſt God, as far as I could reach him. But alas! alas! had God entered into any covenant with me at all; had God put me on any terms, though never ſo hard, for the obtaining of mercy; had Chriſt been but once offered to me, What do you think would I not have done? *&c.*

O poor ſinners! Your damnation is juſt, if you refuſe grace brought home by Jeſus Chriſt himſelf to your very doors. The Lord grant this may not be thy caſe who readeſt theſe lines.

Inf. 4. Moreover; hence is follows, that *none doth, or can love like Chriſt: His love to man is matchleſs.* The freeneſs, ſtrength, antiquity, and immutability of it, puts a luſtre on it beyond all examples. Surely it was a ſtrong love indeed, that made him lay aſide his glory, to be found in faſhion as a man, to become any thing, though never ſo much below himſelf, for our ſalvation.

Digitized by Google

We read of Jonathan's love to David, which paſſed the love of women; of Jacob's love to Rachel, who for her ſake endured the heat of ſummer, and cold of winter; of David's love to Abſalom; of the primitive Chriſtians love to one another, who could die one for another: but neither had they that to deny which Chriſt had, nor had he thoſe inducements from the object of his love that they had. His love, like himſelf, is wonderful.

Inf. 5. Did the Lord Jeſus ſo deeply abaſe and humble himſelf for us? *What an engagement hath he thereby put on us, to exalt and honour him, who for our ſakes was ſo abuſed?* It was a good ſaying of * Bernard, "By how much the viler he was made for me, by ſo "much the dearer he ſhall be to me." And O that all, to whom Chriſt is dear, would ſtudy to exalt and honour him, theſe four ways.

1. *By frequent and delightful ſpeaking of him, and for him.* When Paul had once mentioned his name, he knows not how to part with it, but repeats it no leſs than ten times in the compaſs of ten verſes, in 1 Cor. i. It was Lambert's motto, "None but Chriſt, "none but Chriſt." It is ſaid of Johannes Milius, that after his converſion, he was ſeldom or never obſerved to mention the name of Jeſus, but his eyes would drop; ſo dear was Chriſt to him. Mr Fox never denied any beggar that aſked an alms in Chriſt's name, or for Jeſus's ſake. Julius Palmer, when all concluded he was dead, being turned as black as a coal on the fire, at laſt moved his ſcorched lips, and was heard to ſay, *Sweet Jeſus*, and fell aſleep. Plutarch † tells us, that when Titus Flaminius had freed the poor Grecians from the bondage with which they had been long ground by their oppreſſors, and the herald was to proclaim in their audience the articles of peace he had concluded for them, they ſo preſſed upon him, (not being half of them able to hear), that he was in great danger to have loſt his life in the preſs; at laſt, reading them a ſecond time, when they came to underſtand diſtinctly how their caſe ſtood, they ſhouted for joy, crying, Σωτηρ, Σωτηρ, "a Saviour, a Saviour," that they made the very heavens ring again with their acclamations, and the very birds fell down aſtoniſhed. And all that night the poor Grecians, with inſtruments of muſic, and ſongs of praiſe, danced and ſung about his tent, extolling him as a god that had delivered them. But ſurely you have more reaſon to be exalting the Author of your ſalvation, who, at a dearer rate, hath freed you from a more dreadful bondage. O ye that have eſcaped the eternal wrath of God,

* *Quanto pro me vilior, tanto mihi charior.* Bern.
† *Plutarch in vita Titi Flaminii.*

Digitized by Google

by the humiliation of the Son of God, extol your great Redeemer, and for ever celebrate his praiſes!

2. *By acting your faith on him, for whatſoever lies in the promiſes yet unaccompliſhed.* In this you ſee the great and moſt difficult promiſe fulfilled, Gen. iii. 15. "The ſeed of the woman ſhall break "the ſerpent's head;" which contained this mercy of Chriſt's incarnation for us in it: I ſay, you ſee this fulfilled; and ſeeing that which was moſt improbable and difficult is come to paſs, even Chriſt come in the fleſh, methinks our unbelief ſhould be removed for ever, and all other promiſes the more eaſily believed. It ſeemed much more improbable and impoſſible to reaſon, that God ſhould become a man, and ſtoop to the condition of a creature, than being a man, to perform all that good which his incarnation and death procured. Unbelief uſually argues from one of theſe two grounds, Can God do this? or, Will God do that? It is queſtioning either his *power* or his *will*; but after this, let it ceaſe for ever to cavil againſt either. His power to ſave ſhould never be queſtioned by any that know what ſufferings and infinite burdens he ſupported in our nature: and ſurely his willingneſs to ſave ſhould never be put to a queſtion, by any that conſider how low he was content to ſtoop for our ſakes.

3. *By drawing nigh to God with delight,* "through the veil of "Chriſt's fleſh," Heb. x. 19. God hath made this fleſh of Chriſt a veil betwixt the brightneſs of his glory and us: it ſerves to rebate the unſupportable glory, and alſo to give admiſſion to it, as the veil did in the temple. Through this body of fleſh, which Chriſt aſſumed, are all *decurſus et recurſus gratiarum,* "outlets of grace "from God to us; and through it, alſo, muſt be all our returns "to God again." It is made the great medium of our communion with God.

4. *By applying yourſelves to him, under all temptations, wants and troubles, of what kind ſoever, as to one that is tenderly ſenſible of your eaſe, and moſt willing and ready to relieve you.* O remember, this was one of the inducements that perſuaded and invited him to take your nature, that he might be furniſhed abundantly with tender compaſſion for you, from the ſenſe he ſhould have of your infirmities in his own body*. Heb. ii. 17. "Wherefore in all things "it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might "be a merciful and faithful High-prieſt, in things pertaining to "God, to make reconciliation for the ſins of the people." You know by this argument the Lord preſſed the Iſraelites to be kind

* *Haud ignara mali, miſeris ſuccurrere diſco.* Virg.
Like you, an alien in a land unknown,
I learn to pity woes, ſo like mine own. *Dryden.*

Digitized by Google

to ſtrangers; for, (ſaith he) "you know the heart of a ſtranger," Exod. xxii. 9. Chriſt, by being in our nature, knows experimentally what our wants, fears, temptations, and diſtreſſes are, and ſo is able to have compaſſion. O let your hearts work upon this admirable condeſcenſion of Chriſt, till they be filled with it, and your lips ſay,

Thanks be to God for Jeſus Chriſt.

SERMON XIX.

Of CHRIST's Humiliation in his Life.

PHIL. ii. 8.

And being found in faſhion as a man, he humbled himſelf, and became obedient to death, even the death of the croſs.

THIS ſcripture hath been once already under conſideration, and, indeed, can never be enough conſidered: It holds forth the humbled ſtate of the Lord Jeſus, during the time of his abode on earth. The ſum of it was delivered you before in this point;

Doct. *That the ſtate of Chriſt, from his conception to his reſurrection, was a ſtate of deep abaſement and humiliation.*

The humiliation of Chriſt was propoſed to you under theſe three general heads or branches; of his humiliation in his *incarnation*; his humiliation in his *life*; and his humiliation in his *death*. How he was humbled by incarnation, hath been opened above in the *18th ſermon*. How he was humbled in his life, is the deſign of this ſermon: yet expect not that I ſhould give you here an exact hiſtory of the life of Chriſt. The ſcriptures ſpeak but little of the private part of his life, and it is not my deſign to dilate upon all the memorable paſſages that the evangeliſts (thoſe faithful narrators of the life of Chriſt) have preſerved for us; but only to obſerve and improve thoſe more obſervable particulars in his life, wherein eſpecially he was humbled: and ſuch are theſe that follow.

Firſt, The Lord Jeſus was humbled in his very infancy, by his circumciſion according to the law. For being of the ſtock of Iſrael, he was to undergo the ceremonies, and ſubmit to the ordinances belonging to that people, and thereby to put an end to them; for ſo it became him to fulfil all righteouſneſs. Luke ii. 21. "And

Digitized by Google

" when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the " child, his name was called Jesus." Hereby the Son of God was greatly humbled, especially in these two respects.

1. In that hereby he obliged himself to keep the whole law*, though he was the Law-maker; Gal. v. 3. " For I testify again to " every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole " law." The apostle's meaning is, he is a debtor in regard of duty, because he that thinks himself bound to keep one part of the ceremonial law, doth thereby bind himself to keep it all; for where all the parts are inseparably united, (as they are in the law of God) we pull all upon us, by engaging or meddling with any one. And he that is a debtor in *duty* to keep the whole law, quickly becomes a debtor in regard of *penalty*, not being able to keep any part of it. Christ therefore coming as our surety, to pay both those debts, the debt of duty, and the debt of penalty to the law; he, by his circumcision, obliges himself to pay the whole debt of duty, by fulfilling all righteousness: and though his obedience to it was so exact and perfect, that he contracted no debt of penalty for any transgression of his own; yet he obliges himself to pay the debt of penalty which he had contracted, by suffering all the pains due to transgressors. This was that intolerable yoke that none were able to bear but Christ, Acts xv. 10. And it was no small abasure of Christ to bind himself to the law, as a subject made under it: For he was the Law-giver, above all law: and herein that sovereignty of a God (one of the choice flowers in the crown of heaven) was obscured and veiled by his subjection.

2. Hereby he was represented to the world not only as a *subject*, but also as a *sinner*: for though he was pure and holy, yet this ordinance passing upon him, seemed to imply as if corruption had indeed been in him, which must be cut off by mortification. For this was the mystery principally intended by circumcision†: it served to mind and admonish Abraham, and his seed, of the natural guiltiness, uncleanness, and corruption of their hearts and nature. So Jer. iv. 4. " Circumcise yourselves unto the Lord, " and take away the foreskins of your hearts, ye men of Judah;" i. e. the sinfulness and corruption of them. Hence the rebellious and unmortified are called " stiff-necked and uncircumcised in " heart," as it is Acts vii. 51. And as it served to convince of natural uncleanness, so it signified and sealed " the putting off the

* Christ was circumcised and presented, (Luke ii. 22.) because he became subject, not only to the eternal and moral law, but also to the ceremonial and every other divine law. *Amef. Meditat.* 101.

† Such ceremonial observations were so many acknowledgments of sin; therefore Christ, who was made sin for us, conformed to them very suitably. *Amef. Med.* p. 101.

Digitized by Google

" body of the ſins of the fleſh," as the apoſtle phraſeth it, Col. ii. 11. Now, this being the end of God in the inſtitution of this ordinance for Abraham and his ordinary ſeed, Chriſt, in his infancy, by ſubmitting to it, did not only veil his ſovereignty by ſubjection, but was alſo repreſented as a ſinner to the world, though moſt holy and pure in himſelf.

Secondly, Chriſt was humbled by perſecution, and that in the very morning of his life: he was baniſhed almoſt as ſoon as born. Matth. ii. 13. " Flee into Egypt (ſaith the angel to Joſeph) and " be thou there until I bring thee word, for Herod will ſeek the " young child to deſtroy him." Ungrateful Herod! was this entertainment for a Saviour? what, raiſe a country againſt him, as if a *deſtroyer*, rather than a Saviour, had landed upon the coaſt? what, deny him the protection of thoſe laws, under which he was born, and that before he had broken the leaſt punctilio of them? The child of a beggar may claim the benefit and protection of law, as his birth-right; and muſt the Son of God be denied it! But herein Herod fulfilled the ſcriptures, whilſt venting his own luſts; for ſo it was foretold, Jer. xxxi. 15. And this early perſecution was not obſcurely hinted in the title of the 22d Pſalm, that pſalm which looks rather like a hiſtory of the New, than a prophecy of the Old Teſtament; for as it contains a moſt exact deſcription of Chriſt's ſufferings, ſo it is fitted with a moſt ſuitable title, *To the chief muſician upon Aijeleth Shahar*, which ſignifies the Hind of the morning, or that *deer* which the Hunter rouzes betimes in the morning, and ſingles out to hunt down that day; and ſo they did by him, as the 16th verſe will tell you; for, (ſaith he), " Dogs have compaſſed me, the aſſembly of the wicked have " encloſed me." Upon which Muſculus ſweetly and ingeniouſly deſcants: " * O what ſweet veniſon," (ſaith he), " is the fleſh of " Chriſt! abundantly ſweeter to the believing ſoul, than that " which the nobles of this world eſteem moſt delicate: and leſt it " ſhould want the higheſt and richeſt ſavour to a delicate palate, " Chriſt, our hart, was not only killed, but hunted to the purpoſe " before he was killed; even as great men uſe, by hunting and " chaſing, before they cut the throat of the deer, to render its " fleſh more ſweet, tender, and delicate:" Thus was Chriſt hunted betimes out of the country he was born in. And, no doubt but where ſuch dogs ſcent and wind the Spirit of Chriſt in

* *O vere cervinam Chriſti carnem, animæ fideli longe ſapidiorem ea, quam hujus mundi nobiles in deliciis habent. Ac ne quid ſapori ac guſtui delicato deeſſet, non ſimpliciter occiſa eſt noſtra cerva, ſed antea bene agitata. quemadmodem ſolent magnates, venando et agitando, antequam capiant et occidant, carnem cervinam ſuaviorem, molliorem, ac delicatiorem reddere.* Muſc. in loc.

Digitized by Google

any, they would purſue them alſo to deſtruction, did not a gracious Providence rate them off. But to return, how great a humiliation is this to the Son of God, not only to become an infant, but in his infancy, to be hurried up and down, and driven out of his own land as a vagabond!

Thirdly, Our Lord Jeſus Chriſt was yet more humbled in his life, by that *poverty* and outward meanneſs which all along attended his condition: he lived poor and low all his days, ſo ſpeaks the apoſtle, 2 Cor. viii. 9. "Though he was rich, yet for our ſakes "he became poor;" ſo poor, that he was never owner of a houſe to dwell in, but lived all his days in other men's houſes, or lay in the open air. His outward condition was more neglected and deſtitute than that of the birds of the air, or beaſts of the earth; ſo he told that ſcribe, who profeſſed ſuch readineſs and reſolution to follow him, but was ſoon cooled, when Chriſt told him, Matth. viii. 20. "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have "neſts; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." It was a common ſaying among the Jews, *when the Meſſiah comes, he will not find a place to ſit down in**. Sometimes he feeds upon barley-bread and broiled fiſh, and ſometimes he was hungry, and had nothing to eat, Mark xi. 12. As for money, he was much a ſtranger to it; when the tribute-money was demanded of him, he and Peter were not ſo well furniſhed to make half-a-crown betwixt them to pay it †, but muſt work a miracle for it, Mat. xvii. ult. He came not to be miniſtered unto, but to miniſter, Mat. xx. 28. not to amaſs *earthly* treaſures, but to beſtow *heavenly* ones. His great and heavenly ſoul neglected and deſpiſed thoſe things, that too many of his own too much admire and proſecute. He ſpent not a careful thought about thoſe things that eat up thouſands and ten thouſands of our thoughts. Indeed he came to be humbled, and to teach men by his example the vanity of this world, and pour contempt upon the enſnaring glory of it; and therefore went before us in a ‡ choſen and voluntary poverty: yet he lived not a mendicant life neither; but was ſometimes fed by ordinary, and ſometimes by miraculous and extraordinary ways. He had wherewith to ſupport that precious body of his, till the time was

* This paſſage is manifeſtly taken from among theſe which the Jews, even then, carried about as traditions of the fathers, concerning the coming of the Meſſiah; and is applied accordingly: ſuch was the ſaying of the Gemariſts, that when he came, there would not be a place for him to ſit down, or to reſt his body on. *Heinſius on this paſſage.*

† The word στατηρ, which in Matth. xvii. 27. is rendered *a piece of money*, contained two drachmas, and was in value 2*s.* 6*d.*

‡ Chriſt's poverty was not in conſequence of any ſingular vow, or like that of a mendicant. *Amef. Med.* p. 104.

Digitized by Google

come to offer it up to God; but would not indulge and pamper that flesh, which he purposely assumed to be humbled in.

Fourthly, Our dear Jesus was yet further humbled in his life, by the horrid temptations wherewith Satan assaulted him, than which nothing could be more grievous to his holy heart *. The Evangelist gives us an account of this in Luke iv. from the first to the fourteenth verse: in which context you find how the bold and envious spirit meets the Captain of our salvation in the field, comes up with him in the wilderness, when he was solitary, and had not a second with him, verse 1. there he keeps him fasting forty days and forty nights, to prepare him to close with his temptation: all this while Satan was pointing and edging that temptation, with which at last he resolves to try the breast of Christ by a home thrust, verse 2. By this time he supposes Christ was hungry, (as indeed he was) and now he thought it was time to make his assault, which he doth in a very suitable temptation at first, and with *variety* of temptations, trying several weapons upon him afterwards. But when he had made a thrust at him with that first weapon, in which he especially trusted, "command that these stones may be "made bread," verse 3. and saw how Christ had put it by, verse 4. then he changes postures, and assaults him with temptations to blasphemy, even "to fall down and worship the Devil." But when he saw he could fasten nothing on him, that he was as pure fountain-water in a chrystal phial, how much soever agitated and shaken, no dregs, or filthy sediment would rise, but he remained pure still: I say, seeing this, he makes a politic retreat, quits the field for a season, verse 13. yet leaves it *cum animo revertendi*, with a resolution to return to him again. And thus was our blessed Lord Jesus humbled by the temptations of Satan: and what can you imagine more burdensome to him that was brought up from eternity with God, delighting in the holy Father, to be now shut into a wilderness with the Devil, there to be baited so many days, and have his ears *filled*, though not *defiled*, with horrid blasphemy; *quantum mutatus ab illo?* O how was the case altered with Christ! from what, to what was he now come? A chaste woman would account it no common misery to be dogged up and down, and solicited by some vile ruffian, though there were no danger of defilement.

A man would account it no small unhappiness to be shut up five or six weeks together with the Devil, though appearing in a human shape, and to hear no language but that of hell spoken all

* It is the fittest and most ordinary season for Satan to tempt, when he sees men hungering and thirsting after temporal things; as the fowler prepares his net especially in the winter season, when the birds have nothing to eat. *Stapletonis prompt.* p. 418.

Digitized by Google

that time; and the more holy the man is, the more would he be afflicted to hear such blasphemies malignantly spat upon the holy and reverend name of God; much more to be solicited by the Devil to join with him in it. This, I say, would be accounted no small misery for a man to undergo. How great a humiliation then must it be to the great God, to be humbled to this! to see a slave of his house, setting upon himself the Lord! His jailor coming to take him prisoner, if he can! A base apostate spirit, daring to attempt such things as these upon him! Surely this was a deep abasement to the Son of God.

Fifthly, Our blessed Lord Jesus was yet more humbled in his life than all this, and that by his own *Sympathy* with others, under all the burdens that made him groan. For he, much more than Paul, could say, *who is afflicted, and I burn not?* He lived all his time as it were in an hospital among the sick and wounded. And so tender was his heart, that every groan for sin, or under the effects of sin, pierced him so, that it was truly said, "himself bare our sick-"nesses, and took our infirmities," Matth. viii. 16, 17. It was spoken upon the occasion of some poor creatures that were possessed by the Devil, and brought to him to be dispossessed. It is said of him, John xi. 33. "That when he saw Mary weeping, and the "Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the "Spirit, and was troubled." And verse 35. *Jesus wept:* yea, his heart flowed with pity for them that had not one drop of pity for themselves. Witness his tears spent upon Jerusalem, Luke xix. 41, 42. He foresaw the misery that was coming, though they never foresaw, nor feared it. O how it pierced him to think of the calamities hanging over that great city! Yea, he mourned for them that could not mourn for their own sins. Therefore it is said, Mark iii. 5. "He was grieved for the hard-"ness of the people's hearts." So that the commendation of a good physician, that he doth as it were die with every patient, was most applicable to our tender-hearted Physician. This was one of those things that made him "a man of sorrows, and acquainted "with grief." For the more holy any is, the more he is grieved and afflicted for the sin of others; and the more tender any man is, the more he is pierced with beholding the miseries that lie upon others. And it is sure, never any heart more holy, or more sensible, tender and compassionate than Christ's.

Sixthly, Lastly, That which yet helped to humble him lower, was the ungrateful, and most base and unworthy entertainment the world gave him. He was not received or treated like a Saviour, but as the vilest of men. One would think that he who came from heaven, "to give his life a ransom for many," Matt. xx. 28. He that was, "not sent to condemn the world, but that the world

Digitized by Google

"through him might be saved," John iii. 17. He that came "to "dissolve the works of the devil," 1 John iii. 8. knock off the chains, "open the prison-doors, proclaim liberty to the captives," Isa. lxi. 1. I say, when such a Saviour arrived, O with what acclamations of joy, and demonstration of thankfulness, should he have been received? One would have thought they should even kiss the ground he trod upon: but instead of this, he was hated, John xv. 18. He was despised by them, Mat. xiii. 55. So reproached, that he became "the reproach of men," as who should say, a corner for every one to spit in; a butt for every base tongue to shoot at, Psal. xxii. 6. Accused of working his miracles by the power of the devil, Mat. xii. 24. He was trod upon as a worm, Psal. xxii. 6. They buffetted him, Mat. xxvi. 67. smote him on the head, Mat. xxvii. 30. arrayed him as a fool, ver. 20. spat in his face, ver. 30. despised him as the basest of men, "this fellow "said," Mat. xxvi. 61. One of his own followers sold him, another forsware him, and all forsook him in his greatest troubles. All this was a great abasement to the Son of God, who was not thus treated for a day, or in one place, but all his days, and in all places. "He endured the contradiction of sinners against him-"self." In these particulars I have pointed out to you something of the humble life Christ lived in the world. From all these particulars some useful inferences will be noted.

Inference 1. From the first degree of Christ's humiliation, in submitting to be circumcised, and thereby obliging himself to fulfil the whole law, it followeth, *that justice itself may set both hand and seal to the acquittances and discharges of believers.* Christ hereby obliged himself to be the law's pay-master, to pay its utmost demand; to bear that yoke of obedience that never any before him could bear. And as his circumcision obliged him to keep the whole law; so he was most precise and punctual in the observation of it*: so exact, that the sharp eye of Divine Justice cannot espy the least flaw in it; but acknowledges full payment, and stands ready to sign the believer a full acquittance. Rom. iii. 15. "That God "may be just, and the justifier of him that believes in Jesus." Had not Christ been thus obliged, we had never been discharged. Had not his obedience been an intire, complete, and perfect thing, our justification could not have been so. He that hath a precious treasure, will be loth to adventure it in a leaky vessel: wo to the holiest man on earth, if the safety of his precious soul were to be adventured on the bottom of the best duty that ever he performed.

* Justification is one individual perfect act, of which all, who are interested in it, partake equally. *Woleb.*

Digitized by Google

But Christ's obedience and righteousness is firm and sound; a bottom that we may safely adventure all in.

Inf. 2. From the early flight of Christ into Egypt, we infer, *That the greatest innocency and piety cannot exempt from persecution and injury. Who more innocent than Christ?* And who more persecuted? The world is the world still. "I have given them thy "word, and the world hath hated them," John xvii. 14. The world lies in wait as a thief for them that carry this treasure; they who are empty of it may sing before him, he never stops them: but persecution follows piety, as the shadow doth the body. 2 Tim. iii. 12. "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus, must suffer persecution." Whosoever resolves to live holy, must never expect to live quietly. It is godliness, and godliness *in Christ Jesus*, i. e. such as is derived from Christ, true godliness; and it is true godliness as it is manifested in practice. All that will live godly, that will exert holiness in their lives, which convinces and galls the consciences of the ungodly. It is this enrages, for there is an enmity and antipathy betwixt them: and this enmity runs in the blood; and it is transmitted with it from generation to generation, Gal. iv. 29. "As then, he that was born after the flesh, persecuted him that was born after the Spirit; even so it is now." Mark, so it *was*, and so still it *is*. "* Cain's club is still "carried up and down crimsoned with the blood of Abel," said Bucholtzer; but thus it must be, to conform us unto Christ: and O that your *spirits*, as well as your *conditions*, may better harmonize with Christ. He suffered meekly, quietly, and self-denyingly; be ye like him. Let it not be said of you, as it is of the hypocrite, whose lusts are only *hid*, but not *mortified* by his duties, that he is like a *flint*, which seems cold; but if you strike him, he is all fiery. To do well, and suffer ill, is Christ-like.

Inf. 3. From the third particular of Christ's humiliation, I infer, *that such as are full of grace and holiness, may be destitute and empty of creature-comforts.* What an overflowing fulness of grace was there in Christ? and yet to what a low ebb did his outward comforts sometimes fall? and as it fared with him, so with many others now in glory with him, whilst they were in the way to that glory; 1 Cor. iv. 11 "Even to this present hour, we both hunger, and "thirst, and are naked, and buffetted, and have no certain dwel-"ling-place." Their *souls* were richly clothed with robes of righteousness, their *bodies* naked or meanly clad. Their *souls fed high*, even on hidden manna, their *bodies hungry*. Let us be content (saith Luther) with our hard fare; for do we not feast with angels upon that bread of life? Remember, when wants pinch

* *Multi adhuc sunt, qui clavem sanguine Abelis rulentem circumferunt.* Bucholtz.

Digitized by Google

hard, that these fix no marks of God's hatred upon you. He hath dealt no worse with you than he did with his own Son. Nay, which of you is not better accommodated than Christ was? If you be hungry or thirsty, you have some refreshments; you have beds to lie on; the Son of man had not where to lay his head; the Heir of all things had sometimes nothing to eat. And remember you are going to a plentiful country, where all your wants will be supplied; "poor in the world, rich in faith, and heirs of the "kingdom which God hath promised," James ii. 5. The meanness of your *present*, will add to the lustre of your *future* condition.

Inf. 4. From the fourth particular of Christ's humiliation in his life, by Satan's temptations, we infer, *That those in whom Satan hath no interest, may have most trouble from him in this world*, John xiv. 30. "The Prince of this world cometh, and hath no-"thing in me." Where he knows he cannot be a *conqueror*, he will not cease to be a *troubler*. This bold and daring spirit adventures upon Christ himself; for doubtless he was filled with envy at the sight of him, and would do what he could, though to no purpose, to obstruct the blessed design in his hand. And it was the wisdom and love of Christ to admit him to come as near him as might be, and try all his darts upon him; that by this experience he might be filled with pity to succour them that are tempted. And as he set on Christ, so much more will he adventure upon us; and but too oft comes off a conqueror. Sometimes he shoots the fiery darts of blasphemous injections. These fall as flashes of lightning on the dry thatch, which instantly sets all in a combustion. And just so it is attended with an after thunder-clap of inward horror, that shivers the very heart, and strikes all into confusion within.

Divers rules are prescribed in this case to relieve poor distressed ones. One adviseth to think seriously on that which is darted suddenly, and to do by your hearts as men used to do with young horses, that are apt to start and boggle at every thing in the way; we bring them close to the things they fright at, make them look on them, and smell to them, that time and better acquaintance with such things, may teach them not to start. Others advise to diversions of the thoughts, as much as may be, to think quite another way. These rules are contrary to one another, and I think signify but little to the relief of a poor soul so distressed.

The best rule, doubtless, is that of the apostle, Eph. vi. 16. "Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be "able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked." Act your faith, my friends, upon your tempted Saviour, who passed through

Digitized by Google

temptations before you: and particularly exercise faith on three things in Christ's temptations.

1. Believingly consider, how great variety of temptations were tried upon Christ; and of what a horrid blasphemous nature that was, *fall down and worship me.*

2. Believingly consider, that Christ came off a perfect conqueror in the day of his trial, beat Satan out of the field. For he saw what he attempted on Christ was as impossible as to batter the body of the sun with snow-balls.

3. Lastly, Believe that the benefits of those his victories and conquests are for you; and that for your sakes he permitted the tempter to come so near him: as you find, Heb. ii. 18.

Object. Heb. iv. 15. If you say, true, Christ was tempted as well as I; but there is a vast difference betwixt his temptations and mine: for the prince of this world came, and found nothing in him, John xiv. 13. He was not internally *defiled*, tho' externally *assaulted*; but I am defiled by them as well as troubled.

Sol. This is a different case. True, it is so, and must be so, or else it had signified nothing to your relief. For had Christ been internally defiled, he had not been a fit Mediator for you; nor could you have had any benefit, either by his temptations, or sufferings for you. But he being tempted, and yet still escaping the defilement of sin, hath not only satisfied for the sins you commit when tempted, but also got an experimental sense of the misery of your condition, which is in him (though now in glory) as a spring of pity and tender compassion to you. Remember, poor tempted Christian, "the God of peace shall shortly tread Satan under thy "feet," Rom. xvi. 20. Thou shalt set thy foot on the neck of that enemy: and as soon as both thy feet are over the threshold of glory, thou shalt cast back a smiling look, and say, now, Satan, do thy worst; now I am there where thou canst not come. Mean while, till thou be out of his reach, let me advise thee to go to Jesus Christ, and open the matter to him; tell him how that base spirit falls upon thee, yea, sets upon thee, even in his presence: intreat him to rebuke and command him off: beg him to consider thy case, and say, Lord, dost thou remember how thy own heart was once grieved, though not defiled, by his assaults? I have grief and guilt together upon me. Ah Lord, I expect pity and help from thee; thou knowest the heart of a stranger, the heart of a poor and tempted one. This is singular relief in this case. O try it!

Inf. 5. Was Christ yet more humbled, by his own sympathy with others in their distresses? Hence we learn, that a compassionate spirit, towards such, as labour under burdens of sin, or affliction, is Christ-like, and truly excellent: this was the Spirit of Christ: O be like him! Put on as the elect of God, bowels of

Digitized by Google

mercy, Col. iii. 12. "Weep with them that weep, and rejoice "with them that rejoice," Rom. xii. 15. It was Cain that said, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Bleſſed Paul was of a contrary temper, 2 Cor. xi. 29. "Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not?" Three things promote ſympathy in Chriſtians, one is the Lord's pity for them; he doth as it were ſuffer with them; "in all their afflictions he was afflicted*;" Iſa. lxiii. 9. Another is, the relation we ſuſtain to God's afflicted people: they are members with us in one body, and the members ſhould have the ſame care of one another, 1 Cor. xii. 25. The laſt is, we know not how ſoon ourſelves may need from others, what others now need from us. "Reſtore him with the ſpirit of "meekneſs, conſidering thyſelf, leſt thou alſo be tempted," Gal. vi. 1.

Inf. 6. Did the world help on the humiliation of Chriſt by their baſe and vile uſage of him? Learn hence, *that the judgment the world gives of perſons, and their worth, is little to be regarded.* Surely it diſpenſes its ſmiles and honours very prepoſterouſly and unduly. In this reſpect, among others, the ſaints are ſtiled perſons, "of "whom the world is not worthy," Heb. xi. 38. i. e. it doth not deſerve to have ſuch choice ſpirits as theſe are, left in it, ſince it knows not how to uſe or treat them. It was the complaint of † Salvian, above eleven hundred years ago; "if any of the nobility "(ſaith he) do but begin to turn to God, preſently he loſeth the "honour of nobility! O in how little honour is Chriſt among "Chriſtian people, when religion ſhall make a man ignoble! So "that (as he adds) many are compelled to be evil, leſt they ſhould "be eſteemed vile." And indeed, if the world gives us any help to diſcover the true worth and excellency of men by, it is by the rule of contraries, for the moſt part. Where it fixes its marks of hatred, we may uſually find that which invites our reſpect and love. It ſhould trouble us the leſs to be under the ſlights and diſreſpects of a blind world. "I could be even proud upon it, (ſaith "‡ Luther) that I ſee I have an ill name from the world." And Jerom § "bleſſed God that counted him worthy to be hated of the "world." Labour to ſtand right in the judgment of God, and trouble not thyſelf for the raſh and headlong cenſures of men. Let

* In all the afflictions, loſſes, and troubles that befal believers, Chriſt ſaith, Half mine: yea, he not only bears half, but all the burden, and more than all; for he bears us and our burdens too. O that more of his Spirit dwelt in his people. We are, or have been, or may be what he is.

† *Si quis ex nobilitate converti ad Deum cæperit, ſtatim honorem nobilitatis amittit. O quantulus in Chriſtiano populo honor Chriſti eſt ubi religio ignobilitatem facit!* Salv. lib. 4. de Gub. Dei.

‡ *Superbus ſio, quod video nomen peſſimum mihi creſcere; gaudeo rebellis dici.* Luth.

§ *Gratias ago Deo meo, quod dignus ſum, quem mundus oderit.* Hieron.

Digitized by Google

wicked men, ſaith one, cut the throat of my credit, and do as they like beſt with it; when the wind of their calumnies, hath blown away my good name from me in the way to heaven, I know Chriſt will take my name out of the mire, and waſh it, and reſtore it to me again.

Inf. 7. From the whole of Chriſt's humiliation in his life, learn you to paſs through all the troubles of your life with a contented, compoſed ſpirit, as Chriſt your fore-runner did. He was *perſecuted*, and bare it meekly; *poor*, and never murmured; *tempted*, and never yielded to the temptation; *reviled*, and reviled not again. When ye therefore paſs through any of theſe trials, look to Jeſus, and conſider him. See how he that paſſed through thoſe things before you, managed himſelf in like circumſtances; yea, not only beat the way by his pattern, and example for you, but hath in every one of thoſe conditions left a bleſſing behind him, for them that follow his ſteps.

Thanks be to God for Jeſus Chriſt.

SERMON XX.

Of Chriſt's Humiliation unto Death, in his firſt preparative Act for it.

JOHN xvii. 11.

And now I am no more in the world, but theſe are in the world; and I come to thee: Holy Father, keep through thine own name, thoſe whom thou haſt given me; that they may be one, as we are.

WE now come to the laſt and loweſt ſtep of Chriſt's humiliation, which was in his ſubmitting to death, even the death of the croſs. Out of this death of Chriſt, the life of our ſoul ſprings up; and in this blood of the croſs, all our mercies ſwim to us. The blood of Chriſt runs deep to ſome eyes: the judicious believer ſees multitudes, multitudes of ineſtimable bleſſings in it. By this crimſon fountain I reſolve to ſit down; and concerning the death of Chriſt, I ſhall take diſtinctly into conſideration the *preparations* made for it: the *nature* and quality of it; the *deportment* and carriage of dying Jeſus; the *funeral ſolemnities* with which he was buried; and laſtly, the *bleſſed deſigns and glorious ends* of his death.

The preparatives for his death were ſix. Three on his own part, and three more by his enemies. The preparations made by himſelf for it, were the ſolemn recommendation of his friends to his Fa-

Digitized by Google

ther; the inſtitution of a commemorative ſign, to perpetuate and refreſh the memory of his death in the hearts of his people, till he come again. And his *pouring out his ſoul to God, by prayer in the garden;* which was the poſture he choſe to be found in, when they ſhould apprehend him.

This ſcripture contains the firſt preparative of Chriſt for death, whereby he ſets his houſe in order, prays for his people, and bleſſes them before he dies. The love of Chriſt was ever tender and ſtrong to his people; but the greateſt manifeſtations of it was at parting. And this he manifeſted two ways eſpecially; *viz.* in leaving ſingular ſupports, and grounds of comfort with them in his laſt heavenly ſermon, in chap. xiv. xv. xvi. and in pouring out his ſoul moſt affectionately to the Father for them in this heavenly prayer, chap. xvii. In this prayer he gives them a *ſpecimen*, or ſample, of that his glorious interceſſion-work, which he was juſt then going to perform in heaven for them. Here his heart overflowed, for he was now leaving them, and going to the Father. The laſt words of a dying man are remarkable, how much more a dying Saviour? I ſhall not launch out into that bleſſed ocean of precious matter contained in this chapter, but take immediately into conſideration the words that I read, wherein I find a weighty petition, ſtrongly followed and ſet home with many mighty arguments.

1. We have here *Chriſt's petition*, or requeſt in behalf of his people, not only thoſe on the place, but all others that then did, or afterwards ſhould believe on him. And the ſum of what he here requeſts for them is, that his Father would keep them through his name. Where you have both the *mercy*, and the *means* of attaining it. The *mercy* is to be *kept*. Keeping implies danger. And there is a double danger obviated in this requeſt; danger in reſpect of ſin, and danger in reſpect of ruin and deſtruction. To both theſe the people of God lie open in this world.

The means of their preſervation from both is the *name*, i. e. the power of God. This name of the Lord is that "ſtrong tower to "which the righteous fly, and are ſafe," Prov. xviii. 10. Alas! It is not your own ſtrength or wiſdom that keeps you, but ye are kept by the mighty power of God. This protecting power of God, doth not, however, exclude our care and diligence, but implies it; therefore it is added, "Ye are kept by the mighty power of "God, through faith, unto ſalvation," 1 Pet. i. 5. God keeps his people, and yet they are to keep themſelves in the love of God, Jude, ver. 21. to keep their hearts with all diligence, Prov. iv. 23. This is the ſum of the petition.

2. The arguments with which he urgeth and preſſes on this requeſt, are drawn partly from *his own condition*, "I am no more in "the world;" *i. e.* I am going to die; within a very few hours I

Digitized by Google

shall be separated from them, in regard of my corporeal presence. Partly from *their condition*; "but these are in the world;" *i. e.* I must leave them in the midst of danger; and partly from *the joint interest his Father and himself had in them*; "Keep those that thou "hast given me:" with several other most prevalent pleas, which, in their proper places, shall be anon produced, and displayed, to illustrate and confirm this precious truth which this scripture affords us.

Doct. *That the fatherly care, and tender love of our Lord Jesus Christ, was eminently discovered in that pleading prayer he poured out for his people at his parting with them.*

It pertained to the priest and father of the family to bless the rest, especially when he was to be separated from them by death. This was a rite in Israel. When good Jacob was grown old, and the time was come that he should be gathered to his fathers, then "he blessed Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh, saying, God, before "whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which "fed me all my life long unto this day, the angel which redeem-"ed me from all evil, bless the lads," Gen. xlviii. 15, 16. This was * a prophetical and patriarchal blessing: not that Jacob could bless as God blesses; he could speak the words of blessing, but he knew the effect, the real blessing itself, depended upon God. And though he blessed *authoritatively*, yet not *potestatively*; *i. e.* he could, as the mouth of God, pronounce blessings, but could not confer them†. Thus he blessed his children, as his father Isaac had also blessed him before he died, Gen. xxviii. 3. and all these blessings were delivered prayer-wise.

Now when Jesus Christ comes to die, he will bless his children also, and therein will discover how much dear and tender love he had for them: "Having loved his own, which were in the world, "he loved them to the end," John xiii. 1. The last act of Christ in this world, was an act of blessing, Luke xxiv. 50, 51.

To prepare this point for use, I will here open, *First*, The mercies which Christ requested of the Father for them. *Secondly*, The arguments used by him to obtain these mercies. *Thirdly*, Why he thus pleaded for them when he was to die. *Fourthly*, and last-

* Jacob desired to bless his sons, not with a common, but with a prophetic and patriarchal blessing; for he knew that he only could speak the words, but the effect depended on another: therefore he sought the blessing from him, with whom speaking and doing are one and the same thing, i. e. God himself. *Ainsworth in loc.*

† Blessing is either potestative, which is to confer temporal blessings by a mere act of the will; or authoritative, which is, by virtue of one's office, to pray for, and to pronounce temporal or eternal blessings to be conferred by God. *Pareus.*

Digitized by Google

ly, How all this gives full evidence of Christ's tender care and love to his people.

First, We will enquire what those mercies and special favours were, which Christ begged for his people, when he was to die. And, we find, among others, these five special mercies desired for them, in this context.

1. The mercy of preservation, both from sin and danger: so in the text; "Keep, through thine own name, those whom thou hast "given me:" which is explained, verse 15. "I pray not that thou "shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep "them from the evil." We, in ours, and the saints that are gone, in their respective generations, have reaped the fruit of this prayer. How else comes it to pass, that our souls are preserved amidst such a world of temptations, and these assisted and advantaged by our own corruptions? How is it else, that our persons are not ruined and destroyed amidst such multitudes of potent and malicious enemies, that are set on fire of hell? Surely, the preservation of the burning bush, of the three children amidst the flames; of Daniel in the den of lions; are not greater wonders, than these our eyes do daily behold. As the fire would have certainly consumed, and the lions, without doubt, have rended and devoured, had not God, by the interposition of his own hand, stopped and hindered the effect; so would the sin that is in us, and the malice that is in others, quickly ruin our souls and bodies, were it not that the same hand guards and keeps us every moment. To that hand, into which this prayer of Christ delivered your souls and bodies, do you owe all your mercies and salvations, both temporal and spiritual.

2. Another mercy he prays for, is *the blessing of union among themselves*. This he joins immediately with the first mercy of preservation, and prays for it in the same breath, verse 11. "That "they may be one, as we are." And well might he join them together in one breath; for this union is not only a choice mercy in itself, but a special means of that preservation he had prayed for before: their union with one another, is a special means to preserve them all.

3. A third desirable mercy that Christ earnestly prayed for, was, that his "joy might be fulfilled in them," verse 13. He would provide for their joy, even when the hour of his greatest sorrow was at hand; yea, he would not only obtain joy for them, but a full joy: "That my joy might be fulfilled in them." It is as if he had said, O my Father, I am to leave these dear ones in a world of troubles and perplexities; I know their hearts will be subject to frequent despondencies; O let me obtain the cordials of divine joy

Digitized by Google

for them before I go: I would not only have them live, but live joyfully; provide for their fainting hours reviving cordials.

4. And as a continued ſpring to maintain all the forementioned mercies, he prays "they all may be ſanctified through the word "of truth, verſe 17. i. e. more abundantly ſanctified than yet they were, by a deeper radication of gracious habits and principles in their heart. This is a ſingular mercy in itſelf, to have holineſs ſpreading itſelf over and through their ſouls, as the light of the morning. Nothing is in itſelf more deſirable. And it is alſo a ſingular help to their perſeverance, union, and ſpiritual joy, which he had prayed for before, and are all advanced by their increaſing ſanctification.

5. And laſtly, as the complement and perfection of all deſirable mercies, he prays, "that they may be with him, where he is, to "behold his glory," verſe 24. This is the beſt and ultimate privilege they are capable of. The end of his coming down from heaven, and returning thither again, all runs into this, to bring many ſons and daughters unto glory. You ſee Chriſt aſks no trifles, no ſmall things for his people; no mercies, but the beſt that both worlds afford, will ſuffice him on their behalf.

Secondly, Let us ſee how he follows his requeſts, and with what arguments he pleads with the Father for theſe things: and, among others, I ſhall ſingle out ſix choice ones, which are urged in this text, or the immediate context.

The firſt argument is drawn from the joint intereſt, that both himſelf, and his Father, have in their perſons, for whom he prays, "All mine are thine, and thine are mine," verſe 10. As if he ſhould ſay, Father, behold, and conſider the perſons I pray for, they are not aliens, but Chriſtians: yea, they are thy children as well as mine; the very ſame on whom thou haſt ſet thy eternal love, and in that love haſt given them to me; ſo that they are both thine and mine: great is our intereſt in them, and intereſt draws care and tenderneſs. Every one cares for his own, provides for, and ſecures his own. Property, (even amongſt creatures) is fundamental to our labour, care, and watchfulneſs; they would not ſo much prize life, health, eſtates, or children, if they were not their own. Lord, theſe are thine own by many ties or titles: O therefore keep, comfort, ſanctify, and ſave them, for they are thine. What a mighty plea is this? Surely, Chriſtians, your interceſſor is ſkilful in his work, your advocate wants no eloquence or ability to plead for you.

The ſecond argument, and that a powerful one, treads, as I may ſay, upon the very heel of the former, in the next words, "And "I am glorified in them:" *q. d.* my glory and honour are infinitely dear to thee; I know thy heart is entirely upon the exalting and

Digitized by Google

glorifying of thy Son. Now, what glory have I in the world, but what comes from my people? Others neither can, nor will glorify me; nay, I am daily blaſphemed and diſhonoured by them: theſe are they from whom my active glory and praiſe in the world muſt riſe. It is true, both thou and I have glory from other creatures *objectively;* the works that we have made, and impreſt our power, wiſdom and goodneſs upon, do ſo glorify us: and honour we have from our very enemies *accidentally;* their very wrath ſhall praiſe us: but for active and voluntary praiſe, whence comes this but from the people that were formed for that very purpoſe? Should theſe then miſcarry and periſh, where ſhall my manifeſtative and active glory be? and from whom ſhall I expect it? So that here his property and glory are pleaded with the Father, to prevail for thoſe mercies; and they are both great, and valuable things with God. What dearer, what nearer to the heart of God?

Arg. 3. And yet, to make all faſt and ſure, he adds, in the beginning of this verſe 11. a third argument, in theſe words, "And now I am no more in the world." Where we muſt conſider the ſenſe of it, as a propoſition, and the force of it, as an argument. This propoſition, "I am no more in the world," is not to be taken ſimply and univerſally, as if, in no ſenſe, Chriſt ſhould be any more in this world: but only *reſpectively*, as to his corporeal preſence; this was, in a little time, to be removed from his people, which had been a ſweet ſpring of comfort to them, in all their troubles. But now it might have been ſaid to the penſive diſciples, as the ſons of the prophets ſaid to Eliſha, a little before Elijah's tranſlation, "Know ye not that your maſter ſhall be ta-"ken from your heads to-day?" This comfortable enjoyment muſt be taken from them; this is the ſenſe. And here lies the argument; Father, conſider the ſadneſs and trouble I ſhall leave my poor children under. Whilſt I was with them, I was a ſweet relief to their ſouls, whatever troubles they met with: in all doubts, fears, and dangers, they could repair to me; and in their ſtraits and wants I ſtill ſupplied them: they had my counſels to direct them, my reproofs to reduce them, and my comforts to ſupport them; yea, the very ſight of me was an unſpeakable joy and refreſhment to their ſouls: but now the hour is come, and I muſt be gone. All the comfort and benefit they had from my preſence amongſt them, is cut off: and, except thou do make up all this to them another way, what will become of theſe children, when their Father is gone? What will be the caſe of the poor ſheep, and tender lambs, when the ſhepherd is ſmitten? Therefore, O my Father, look thou after them, ſee to them, for they are thine as well as mine; I am glorified in them, and now leaving them, and removing out of this world from them.

Digitized by Google

Arg. 4. And yet, to move and engage the Father's care and love for them, he ſubjoins another great conſideration, in the very next words, drawn from the danger he leaves them in: "But "theſe are in the world." The world is a ſinful, infecting, and unquiet place; *it lies in wickedneſs:* And a hard thing it will be for ſuch poor, weak, imperfect creatures to eſcape the pollutions of it; or, if they do, yet the troubles, perſecutions, and ſtrong oppoſitions of it they cannot eſcape. Seeing therefore I muſt leave thine own dear children, as well as mine, and thoſe from whom the glory is to riſe, in the midſt of a ſinful troubleſome, dangerous world, where they can neither move backward nor forward, without danger of ſin or ruin: O, ſince the caſe ſtands ſo, look after them, provide for them, and take ſpecial care for them all. Conſider who they are, and where I leave them. They are thy children, to be left in a ſtrange country; thy ſoldiers, in the enemies quarters; thy ſheep, in the midſt of wolves; thy precious treaſure, among thieves.

Arg. 5. And yet he hath not done, for he reſolves to ſtrive hard for the mercies he had aſked, and will not come off with a denial; and therefore adds another argument in the next words, *And I come to thee.* As his leaving them was an argument, ſo his coming to the Father is a mighty argument alſo. There is much in theſe words, *I come to thee.* [*I,*] thy beloved Son, in which thy ſoul delighteth; I, to whom thou never denieddſt any thing. 'Tis not a ſtranger, but a ſon; not an adopted, but thine only begotten Son. 'Tis I that [*come.*] I am now coming to thee apace, my Father. I come to thee ſwimming through a bloody ocean. I come, treading every ſtep of my way to thee in blood, and unſpeakable ſufferings; and all this for the ſake of thoſe dear ones I now pray for; yea, the deſign and end of my coming to thee, is for them. I am coming to heaven in the capacity of an advocate, to plead with thee for them. And I come to [*Thee*] *my Father, and their Father; my God, and their God.* Now then, ſince I, that am ſo dear, come through ſuch bitter pangs, to thee, ſo dear, ſo tender-hearted a Father; and all this on their ſcore and account: Since I do but now, as it were, begin, or give them a little taſte of that interceſſion-work, which I ſhall live for ever to perform for them in heaven; Father, hear, Father, grant what I requeſt. O give a comfortable earneſt of thoſe good things which I am coming to thee for, and which I know thou wilt not deny me.

Arg. 6. And, to cloſe up all, he tells the Father how careful he had been to obſerve, and perform that truſt which was committed to him; "While I was with them in the world, I kept them in "thy name; thoſe that thou gaveſt me, I have kept, and none of "them is loſt, but the ſon of perdition," ver. 12.

Digitized by Google

And thus lies the argument: Thou committedſt to me a certain number of elect ſouls, to be redeemed by me; I undertook the truſt, and ſaid, if any of theſe be loſt, at my hand let them be required, I will anſwer for them every one to thee. In purſuance of which truſt, I am now here on the earth, in a body of fleſh. I have been faithful to a point. I have redeemed them (for he ſpeaks of that as finiſhed and done, which was now ready to be done) I have kept them alſo, and confirmed them hitherto: and now, Father, I commit them to thy care. Lo, here they are, not one is loſt, but the ſon of perdition, who was never given. With how great care have I been careful for them! O let them not fail now; let not one of them periſh.

Thus you ſee what a nervous, argumentative, pleading prayer Chriſt poured out to the Father for them at parting.

Thirdly, The next enquiry is, why he thus prayed, and pleaded with God for them, when he was to die?

And certainly it was, not becauſe the Father was unwilling to grant the mercies he deſired for them: No, they came not with difficulty, nor were they wreſted by mere importunity, out of the hand of an unwilling and backward perſon. For, he tells us, John. vi. 27. "The Father himſelf loveth you, i. e. he is propenſe enough of his own accord to do you good. But the reaſons of this exceeding importunity, are,

1. He foreſaw a great trial then at hand; yea, and all the after-trials of his people, as well as that. He knew how much they would be ſifted, and put to, in that hour, and power of darkneſs, that was coming. He knew their faith would be ſhaken, and greatly ſtaggered by the approaching difficulties, when they ſhould ſee their Shepherd ſmitten, and themſelves ſcattered, the Son of man delivered into the hands of ſinners, and the Lord of life hang dead upon the tree, yea, ſealed up in the grave. He foreſaw what ſtraits his poor people would fall into, betwixt a buſy devil, and a bad heart; therefore he prays and pleads with ſuch importunity and ardency for them, that they might not miſcarry.

2. He was now entering upon his interceſſion-work in heaven, and he was deſirous in this prayer to give us a ſpecimen, or ſample, of that part of his work, before he left us; that by this we might underſtand what he would do for us, when he ſhould be out of ſight. For this being his laſt prayer on earth, it ſhews us what affections and diſpoſitions he carried hence with him, and ſatisfies us, that he who was ſo earneſt with God on our behalf, ſuch a mighty pleader here, will not forget us, or neglect our concerns in the other world. Yet, reader, I would have thee always remember, that the interceſſion of Chriſt in heaven is carried much higher than this; it is performed in a way more ſuitable

Digitized by Google

to that ſtate of honour to which he is now exalted. Here he uſed proſtrations of body, cries and tears in his prayers: there, his interceſſion is carried in a more majeſtic way, and with more ſtate, becoming an exalted Jeſus. But yet in this he hath left us a ſpecial aſſiſtance, to diſcover much of the frame, temper, and working of his heart now in heaven towards us.

3. And laſtly, he would leave this as a ſtanding monument of his father-like care, and love to his people, to the end of the world. And for this it is conceived Chriſt delivered this prayer ſo publicly, not withdrawing from the diſciples to be private with God, as he did in the garden; but he delivers it in their preſence, "Theſe things which I ſpeak in the world," ver. 13. This λαλῶ, with the circumſtances of place, [*in the world*], doth plainly ſpeak it to be a public prayer. And not only was it publicly delivered, but it was alſo, by a ſingular providence, recorded at large by John, though omitted by the other evangeliſts; that ſo it might ſtand to all generations, for a teſtimony of Chriſt's tender care and love to his people.

Fourthly, If you aſk, how this gives evidence of Chriſt's tender care and love to his people? which is the laſt enquiry; I anſwer, in few words, for the thing is plain and obvious; it appears in theſe two particulars.

1. His love and care was manifeſted in the choice of mercies for them. He doth not pray for health, honour, long life, riches, &c. but for their preſervation from ſin, ſpiritual joy in God, ſanctification and eternal glory. No mercies but the very beſt in God's treaſure will content him. He was reſolved to get all the beſt mercies for his people; the reſt he is content ſhould be diſpenſed promiſcuouſly by Providence: but theſe he will ſettle as an heritage upon his children. O ſee the love of Chriſt! look over all your ſpiritual inheritance in Chriſt, compare it with the richeſt, faireſt, ſweeteſt inheritance on earth; and ſee what poor things theſe are to yours. O the care of a dear father! O the love of a tender Saviour!

2. Beſides, what an evidence of his tenderneſs to you, and great care for you, was this, that he ſhould ſo intently, and ſo affectionately mind, and plead your concerns with God, at ſuch a time as this was, even when a world of ſorrow encompaſſed him on every ſide; a cup of wrath mixed, and ready to be delivered into his hand: at that very time when the clouds of wrath grew black, a ſtorm coming, and ſuch as he never felt before; when one would have thought, all his care, thoughts, and diligence, ſhould have been employed on his own account, to mind his own ſufferings? No, he doth as it were forget his own ſorrows, to mind our peace and comfort. O love unſpeakable!

Digitized by Google

Corollary 1. If this be ſo, that Chriſt ſo eminently diſcovered his care and love for his people, in this his parting hour; then hence we conclude, *The perſeverence of the ſaints is unqueſtionable**. Do you hear how he pleads! how he begs! how he fills his mouth with arguments! how he chuſeth his words, and ſets them in order, how he winds up his ſpirit to the very higheſt pitch of zeal and fervency? and can you doubt of ſucceſs? Can ſuch a Father deny the importunity, and ſtrong reaſonings and pleadings of ſuch a Son! O, it can never be! he cannot deny him: Chriſt hath the art and ſkill of prevailing with God: He hath (as in this appears) the tongue of the learned. If the heart or hand of God were hard to be opened, yet this would open them; but when the Father himſelf loves us, and is inclined to do us good, who can doubt of Chriſt's ſucceſs? "That which is in motion, is the more "eaſily moved†." The cauſe Chriſt manageth in heaven for us is juſt and righteous. The manner in which he pleads is powerful, and therefore the ſucceſs of his ſuit is unqueſtionable.

The apoſtle profeſſeth, 2 Cor. i. 3. "We can do nothing againſt "the truth." He means it in regard of the bent of his heart‡; he could not move againſt truth and righteouſneſs. And if a holy man cannot, much leſs will a holy God. If Chriſt undertake to plead the cauſe of his people with the Father, and uſe his oratory with him, there is no doubt of his prevailing. Every word in this prayer is a choſen ſhaft, drawn to the head by a ſtrong and ſkilful hand; you need not queſtion but it goes home to the white, and hits the mark aimed at. Doth he pray, "Father, keep, "through thine own name, thoſe thou haſt given me?" Sure they ſhall be kept, if all the power in heaven can keep them. O think on this, when dangers ſurround your ſouls or bodies, when fears and doubts are multiplied within: when thou art ready to ſay in thy haſte, All men are liars, I ſhall one day periſh by the hand of ſin or Satan; think on that encouragement Chriſt gave to Peter, Luke xxii. 31. "I have prayed for thee."

Corollary 2. Again, hence we learn, *that argumentative prayers are excellent prayers.* The ſtrength of every thing is in its joints; there lies much of the ſtrength of prayer alſo: how ſtrongly jointed, how nervous and argumentative was this prayer of Chriſt? Some there are indeed, that think we need not argue and plead in prayer with God, but only preſent the matter of our prayers to him, and let Chriſt alone (whoſe office it is) to plead with the Fa-

* By this, that obſervation is croſſed; *Nemo diu tutus, periculo proximus:* None can be long ſafe, that dwells near to danger: for hereby they are ſafe in the midſt of danger.

† *Quicquid eſt in motu, facile movetur.*

‡ We can do that, which we can do juſtly.

Digitized by Google

ther; as if Christ did not present our pleas and arguments, as well as simple desires to God; as if the choicest part of our prayers must be kept back, because Christ presents our prayers to God. No, no, Christ's pleading is one thing, ours another: "* His and "ours are not opposed, but subordinate;" his pleading doth not destroy, but makes ours successful. God calls us to plead with him, Isa. i. 18. "Come now let us reason together," "God (as "one† observes) reasoneth with us by his word and providences "outwardly, and by the motions of his Spirit inwardly: but we "reason with him by framing (through the help of his Spirit) cer-"tain holy arguments, grounded upon allowed principles, drawn "from his nature, name, word, or works." And it is condemned as a very sinful defect in professors, that they did not plead the church's cause with God; Jer. xxx. 13. "There is none to plead "thy cause that thou mayest be bound up." What was Jacob's wrestling with the angel, but his holy pleading and importunity with God? and how well it pleased God, let the event speak, Gen. xxxii. 24. Hos. xii. 4. "As a prince he prevailed, "and had power with God." On which instance, a Worthy‡ thus glosseth: "Let God frown, smite or wound, Jacob is at a "point, a blessing he came for, and a blessing he will have; "I "will not let thee go, (saith he) unless thou bless me." His limbs, "his life might go, but there is no going from Christ without a "pawn, without a blessing." This is the man, now what is his speed? The Lord admires him, and honours him to all generations. "What is thy name?" saith he; *q. d.* I never met with such a man, titles of honour are not worthy of thee: thou shalt be called, not *Jacob* a shepherd with men, but *Jacob* a prince with God. Nazianzen said of his sister Gorgonia, That she was modestly impudent with God; there was no putting her off with a denial. The Lord, on this account, hath honoured his saints with the title of, His *recorders*‖, men fit to plead with him, as that word [*maskir*] signifies: Isa. lxii. 6. "Ye that make mention of the "Lord, keep not silence, give him no rest." It notes the office of him that recorded all the memorable matters of the king, and used to suggest seasonable *items* and *memorandums* of things to be done.

By these holy pleadings, "the King is held in his galleries," as it is Cant. vii. 5. I know we are not heard, either for our much speaking, or our excellent speaking; it is Christ's pleading in heaven, that makes our pleading on earth available: but yet surely, when the Spirit of the Lord shall suggest proper arguments in

* *Subordinata non pugnant.* † Mr Corbet, of Prayer.

‡ Dr Harris, in his Sermon on Luke xviii. 6, 7, 8.

‖ המזכירים *Rememorantes, vel, qui reminisci faciunt res Domini.* Mont.

Digitized by Google

prayer, and help the humble ſuppliant to preſs them home believingly and affectionately *, when he helps us to weep and plead, to groan and plead, God is greatly delighted in ſuch prayers. "Thou haſt ſaid, I will ſurely do thee good," ſaid Jacob, Gen. xxxii. 12. It is thine own free promiſe; I did not go on mine own head, but thou badſt me go, and encouragedſt me with this promiſe. O this is pleaſing to God, when by his ſpirit of adoption we can come to God, crying, *Abba Father;* Father, hear, forgive, pity, and help me. Am I not thy child, thy ſon, or daughter? To whom may a child be bold to go, with whom may a child have hope to ſpeed, if not with his father? Father, hear me. The fathers of our fleſh are full of bowels, and pity their children, and know how to give good things to them, when they aſk them. When they aſk bread or clothes, will they deny them? And is not the Father of ſpirits more full of bowels, more full of pity? Father, hear me. This is that kind of prayer, which is melody in the ears of God.

Corollary 3. *What an excellent pattern is here, for all that have the charge and government of others committed to them, whether magiſtrates, miniſters, or parents, to teach them how to acquit themſelves towards their relations, when they come to die?*

Look upon dying Jeſus, ſee how his care and love to his people flamed out, when the time of his departure was at hand. Surely, as we are bound to remember our relations every day, and to lay up a ſtock of prayers for them in the time of our health, ſo it becomes us to imitate Chriſt in our earneſtneſs with God for them, when we die. Though we die, our prayers die not with us: they out-live us, and thoſe we leave behind us in the world, may reap the benefit of them, when we are turned to duſt.

For my own part, I muſt profeſs before the world, that I have a high value for this mercy, and do, from the bottom of my heart, bleſs the Lord, who gave me a religious and tender father†, who often poured out his ſoul to God for me: he was one that was inwardly acquainted with God; and being full of bowels to his children, often carried them before the Lord, prayed and pleaded with God for them, wept and made ſupplications for them. This ſtock of prayers and bleſſings left by him before the Lord, I cannot but eſteem above the faireſt inheritance on earth. O it is no ſmall mercy to have thouſands of fervent prayers lying before the Lord, filed up in heaven for us. And O that we would all be faithful to

* The heart cries to God more by groans than by words, and more by tears than by ſpeaking. *Aug. Mr R. A. vind.*

† Mr Richard Flavel, a faithful and laborious preacher of the goſpel, at Haſeler in Warwickſhire, and afterwards in Willerſay in Glouceſterſhire, now with God.

Digitized by Google

this duty! ſurely our love, eſpecially to the ſouls of our relations, ſhould not grow cold when our breath doth. O that we would remember this duty in our lives, and, if God give opportunity and ability, fully diſcharge it when we die; conſidering, as Chriſt did, we ſhall be no more, but they are in this world, in the midſt of a defiled, tempting, troubleſome world; it is the laſt office of love that ever we ſhall do for them. After a little while, we ſhall be no longer ſenſible how it is with them; for (as the church ſpeaks Iſa. lxiii. 16. "Abraham is ignorant of us, and Iſrael acknowledgeth us not") what temptations and troubles may befal them, we do not know. O imitate Chriſt your pattern.

Corollary 4. To conclude; *Hence ye may ſee, what a high eſteem and precious value Chriſt hath of believers;* this was the treaſure which he could not quit, he could not die till he had ſecured it in a ſafe hand: "I come unto thee, holy Father, keep through thine "own name thoſe whom thou haſt given me."

Surely believers are dear to Jeſus Chriſt; and good reaſon, for he hath paid dear for them: let his dying language, this laſt farewel, ſpeak for him, how he prized them. "The Lord's portion "is his people, Jacob is the lot of his inheritance," Deut. xxxii. 9. "They are a peculiar treaſure to him, above all the people of the "earth," Exod. xix. 5. What is much upon our hearts when we die, is dear to us indeed. O how precious, how dear ſhould Jeſus Chriſt be to us! Were we firſt and laſt upon his heart; did he mind us, did he pray for us, did he ſo wreſtle with God about us, when the ſorrows of death compaſſed him about? How much are we engaged, not only to love him, and eſteem him, whilſt we live, but to be in pangs of love for him, when we feel the pangs of death upon us! to be eying him, when our eye-ſtrings break! To have hot affections for Chriſt, when our hands and feet grow cold! The very laſt whiſper of our departing ſouls ſhould be this,

Bleſſed be God for Jeſus Chriſt.

Digitized by Google

SERMON XXI.

The second preparative Act of Christ for his own Death.

1 COR. xi. 23, 24, 25.

—*The Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread: and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.*

CHRIST had no sooner recommended his dear charge to the Father, but (the time of his death hastening on) he institutes his last supper, to be the lasting memorial of his death, in all the churches, until his second coming; therein graciously providing for the comfort of his people, when he should be removed out of their sight. And this was the *second preparative act* of Christ, in order to his death: he will set his house in order, and then die.

This his second act manifests no less love than the former. It is like the plucking off the ring from his finger, when ready to lay his neck upon the block, and delivering it to his dearest friends, to keep that as a memorial of him: "Take this, &c. in remembrance of me."

In the words read, are four things noted by the apostle, about this last and lovely act of Christ, *viz.* the Author, Time, Institution, and End of this holy, solemn ordinance.

1. The author of it*, *The Lord Jesus:* It is an effect of his lordly power, and royal authority; Mat. xxviii. 18. "And Jesus "came, and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto "me in heaven and earth: Go ye therefore." The government is upon his shoulders, Isa. ix. 6. He shall bear the glory, Zech. vi. 13. Who but he that came out of the bosom of the Father, and is acquainted with all the counsels that are there, knows what will be acceptable to God? And who but he can give creatures, by his blessing, their sacramental efficacy and virtue? Bread and wine are naturally fit to refresh and nourish our bodies; but what fitness have they to nourish souls? Surely none, but what they receive from the blessing of Christ that institutes them.

2. The *Time* when the Lord Jesus appointed this ordinance. "In the same night in which he was betrayed:" it could not be sooner, because the passover must first be celebrated; nor later, for

* The authority of him who gives the precept, is the reason of the precept.

Digitized by Google

that night he was apprehended. It is therefore *emphatically* expreſſed ἐν τῇ νυκτὶ, *in that ſame night*, that night for ever to be remembered. He gives, that night, a cordial draught to his diſciples before the conflict: he ſettles, that night, an ordinance in the church, for the confirmation and conſolation of his people, in all generations, to the end of the world. By inſtituting it that night, he gives abundant evidence of his care for his people, in ſpending ſo much of that little, very little, time he had left, on their account.

3. *The Inſtitution itſelf*, in which we have the memorative, ſignificative, inſtructive ſigns, and they are bread and wine; and the glorious myſteries repreſented and ſhadowed forth by them, viz. Jeſus Chriſt crucified; the proper New-Teſtament nouriſhment of believers. Bread and wine are choice creatures, and do excellently ſhadow forth the fleſh and blood of crucified Jeſus; and that both, in their natural uſefulneſs, and manner of preparation. Their uſefulneſs is very great; bread is a creature neceſſary to uphold and maintain our natural life; therefore it is called *the ſtaff of bread*, Iſa. iii. 1. becauſe as a feeble man depends and leans upon his ſtaff, ſo do our feeble ſpirits upon bread. Wine was made to cheer the heart of man, Judg. xi. 13. They are both uſeful and excellent creatures; their preparations, to become ſo uſeful to us, are alſo remarkable. The corn muſt be ground in the mill, the grapes torn and ſqueezed to pieces in the wine-preſs, before we can either have bread or wine. And when all this is done, they muſt be received into the body, or they nouriſh not. So that theſe were very fit creatures to be ſet apart for this uſe and end.

If any object, It is true, they are good creatures, but not precious enough to be the ſigns of ſuch profound and glorious myſteries: it was worth creating a new creature, to be the ſign of the new covenant.

Let him that thus objects, aſk himſelf, whether nothing be precious without pomp? The preciouſneſs of theſe elements is not ſo much from their own natures, as their uſe and end; and that makes them precious indeed. A *loadſtone* at ſea is much more excellent than a *diamond*, becauſe more uſeful. A penny-worth of wax applied to the label of a deed, and ſealed, may in a minute have its value raiſed to thouſands of pounds. Theſe creatures receive their value and eſtimation on a like account. Nor ſhould it at all remain a wonder to thee, why Chriſt ſhould repreſent himſelf by ſuch mean and common things, when thou haſt well conſidered that the excellency of the picture, is its ſimilitude and conformity to the original; and that Chriſt was in a low, ſad, and very abaſed ſtate, when this picture of him was drawn; he was

Digitized by Google

then *a man of sorrows.* These then, as lively signs, shadow forth a crucified Jesus, represent him to us in his red garments. This precious ordinance may much more than Paul, say to us, "I al-"ways bear about in my body the dying of the Lord Jesus." That is the thing it signifies.

4. Lastly take notice of the use, design, and end of this institution. Εις την εμην αναμνησιν, *in remembrance*, or for a memorial of me. O there is much in this: Christ knew how apt our base hearts would be to lose him, amidst such a throng of sensible objects as we here converse with; and how much that forgetfulness of him, and of his sufferings, would turn to our prejudice and loss; therefore doth he appoint a sign to be remembered by: "As oft as "you do this, ye shew forth the Lord's death till he come." Hence we observe, suitable to the design of this discourse,

Doct. *That the sacramental memorial Christ left with his people, is a special mark of his care and love for them*.*

What! To order his picture (as it were) to be drawn when he was dying, to be left with his spouse! To rend his own flesh, and set abroach his own blood to be meat and drink for our souls! O what manner of love was this! It is true, his picture in the sacrament is full of scars and wounds: but these are honourable scars, and highly grace and commend it to his spouse, for whose dear sake he here received them.

"They are marks of love and honour†." And he would be so drawn, or rather he so drew himself, that as oft as his people looked upon the portraiture of him, they might remember, and be deeply affected with those things he here endured for their sakes. These are the wounds my dear husband Jesus received for me. These are the marks of that love which passes the love of creatures. O see the love of a Saviour! This is that heavenly *Pelican* that feeds his young with his own blood. We have read of pitiful and tender women that have eaten the flesh of their own children, Lam. iv. 10. But where is that woman recorded, that gave her own flesh and blood to be meat and drink to her children? Surely the spouse may say of the love of Christ, what David in his lamentations, said of the love of Jonathan, "Thy love "to me was wonderful, passing the love of women." But to prepare the point to be meat indeed, and drink indeed to thy soul, I

* Our Lord, while in life, for commemorating his death, ordered the celebrating of a representation of his sacrifice. *Aug.*

† *Hæc sunt insignia laudis.*

Digitized by Google

ſhall diſcuſs briefly theſe three things, and haſten to the application.

Firſt, What it is to remember the Lord Jeſus in the ſacrament.

Secondly, What aptitude there is in that ordinance, ſo to bring him to our remembrance.

Thirdly, How the care and love of Chriſt is diſcovered by leaving ſuch a memorial of himſelf with us.

* Remembrance, properly, is the return of the mind to an object, about which it hath been formerly converſant: and it may ſo return to a thing, it hath converſed with before, two ways; *ſpeculatively* and *tranſiently*; or *affectingly, and permanently*. A *ſpeculative remembrance*, is only to call to mind the hiſtory of ſuch a perſon, and his ſufferings; that Chriſt was once put to death in the fleſh. An *affectionate remembrance*, is when we ſo call Chriſt and his death to our minds, as to feel the powerful impreſſions thereof upon our hearts. Thus, Mat. xxvi. 75. "Peter remembered the word of "the Lord, and went out, and wept bitterly." His very heart was melted with that remembrance; his bowels were pained, he could not hold, but went out and wept abundantly. Thus Joſeph, when he ſaw his brother Benjamin, whoſe ſight refreſhed the memory of former days and endearments, was greatly affected, Gen. xliii. 29, 30. "And he lift up his eyes, and ſaw his brother Ben-"jamin, his mother's ſon; and ſaid, Is this your younger brother, "of whom ye ſpake to me? and he ſaid, God be gracious to "thee my ſon. And Joſeph made haſte, for his bowels did yern "upon his brother, and he ſought where to weep; and he enter-"ed into his chamber, and wept there." Such a remembrance of Chriſt is that which is here intended. This is indeed a gracious remembrance of Chriſt; the former hath nothing of grace in it. The time ſhall come when Judas that betrayed him, and the Jews that pierced him, ſhall hiſtorically remember what was done; Rev. i. 7. "Behold he cometh with clouds, and every eye ſhall "ſee him; and they alſo which pierced him; and all kindreds of "the earth ſhall wail becauſe of him." Then, I ſay, Judas ſhall remember; This is he whom I perfidiouſly betrayed. Pilate ſhall remember; This is he whom I ſentenced to be hanged on the tree, though I was convinced of his innocency. Then the *ſoldiers* ſhall remember; This is that face we ſpit upon, that head we crowned with thorns: Lo, this is he whoſe ſide we pierced, whoſe hands and feet we once nailed to the croſs. But this remembrance will be their torment, not their benefit. It is not therefore a bare hiſ-

* Memory is a power of renewing and recollecting thoſe ideas, which formerly were impreſſed, but afterwards vaniſhed; it is called by one name, Remembrance. *Keckerman. Synt. Phyſ. l. 4. c. 6. p.* [mihi] 536.

Digitized by Google

torical, ſpeculative, but a gracious, affectionate, impreſſive remembrance of Chriſt, that is here intended: and ſuch a remembrance of Chriſt ſuppoſes and includes,

1. The ſaving knowledge of him. We cannot be ſaid to remember what we never knew; nor to remember, ſavingly, what we never knew ſavingly. There have been many previous, ſweet, and gracious tranſactions, dealings, and intimacies betwixt Chriſt and his people, from the time of their firſt happy acquaintance with him: much of that ſweetneſs they have had in former conſiderations of him, and hours of communion with him, is loſt and gone; for nothing is more volatile, hazardous, and inconſtant, than our ſpiritual comforts: but now at the Lord's table, there our old acquaintance is renewed, and the remembrance of his goodneſs and love refreſhed and revived: "We will remember thy "love more than wine; the upright love thee," Cant. i. 4.

2. Such a remembrance of Chriſt includes faith in it. Without diſcerning Chriſt at a ſacrament, there is no remembrance of him; and, without faith, no diſcerning Chriſt there. But when the precious eye of faith hath ſpied Chriſt, under that vail, it preſently calls up the affections, ſaying, "Come ſee the Lord." Theſe are the wounds he received from me. This is he that loved me, and gave himſelf for me. This is his fleſh, and that his blood; *ſic oculus, ſic ille manus*, &c. ſo his arms were ſtretched out upon the croſs to embrace me; ſo his bleſſed head hung down to kiſs me. Awake my love, rouſe up my hope, flame out my deſires; Come forth, O all ye powers and affections of my ſoul; come, ſee the Lord. No ſooner doth Chriſt by his Spirit call to the believer but faith hears; and diſcerning the voice, turns about, like Mary, ſaying, Rabboni, my Lord, my Maſter.

3. This remembrance of Chriſt includes ſuitable impreſſions made upon the affections, by ſuch a ſight and remembrance of him: and therein lies the nature of that precious thing which we call communion with God. Various repreſentations of Chriſt are made at his table. Sometimes the ſoul there calls to mind the infinite *wiſdom*, that ſo contrived and laid the glorious and myſterious deſign and project of redemption: the effect of this is *wonder* and *admiration*. O the manifold wiſdom of God! Eph. iii. 10. O the depths, the heighths, the length, the breadth of this wiſdom! I can as eaſily ſpan the heavens, as take the juſt dimenſions of it. Sometimes a repreſentation of the *ſeverity* of God is made to the ſoul at that ordinance. O how inflexible and ſevere is the juſtice of God! What, no abatement! no ſparing mercy; no, not to his own Son? This begets a double impreſſion on the heart.

Digitized by Google

(1.) Juſt and deep indignations againſt ſin*. Ah curſed ſin! It was thou uſedſt my dear Lord ſo; for thy ſake he underwent all this. If thy vileneſs had not been ſo great, his ſufferings had not been ſo many. Curſed ſin! thou wait the knife that ſtabbed him: thou the ſword that pierced him. Ah what revenge it works! I remembered that it is ſtoried of one of the kings of France, that hearing the biſhop (as I remember it was Remegius) read the hiſtory of Chriſt's trial and execution, and hearing how barbarouſly they had uſed him, he was moved, with ſo tragical and pathetical a hiſtory, to great indignation againſt Pilate, the Jews, and the rude and bloody ſoldiers, and could not contain himſelf, but cried out, as the biſhop was reading, "O that I had been there with "my Frenchmen, I would have cut all their throats who ſo bar-"barouſly uſed my Saviour."

To allude to this: when the believer conſiders and remembers, that ſin put Chriſt to all that ſhame and ignominy, and that he was wounded for our tranſgreſſions, he is filled with hatred of ſin, and cries out, O ſin, I will revenge the blood of Chriſt upon thee! thou ſhalt never live a quiet hour in my heart. And,

(2.) It produces an humble adoration of the goodneſs and mercy of God, to exact ſatisfaction for our ſins, by ſuch bloody ſtripes, from our ſurety. Lord, if this wrath had ſeized on me, as it did on Chriſt, what had been my condition then! If *theſe things were done in the green tree, what had been the caſe of the dry tree?*

Sometimes repreſentations†, (and not common ones), are made of the love of Chriſt, who aſſumed a body and ſoul, on purpoſe to bear the wrath of God for our ſins. And when that ſurpaſſing love breaks out in its glory upon the ſoul, how is the ſoul tranſported and raviſhed with it! crying out, what manner of love is this! here is a love large enough to go round the heavens, and the heaven of heavens! Who ever loved after this rate, to lay down his life for enemies! O love inutterable and inconceivable! How glorious is my love in his red garments! Sometimes the fruits of his death are there glorioufly diſplayed; even his ſatisfaction for ſin, and the purchaſe his blood made of the eternal inheritance: And this begets thankfulneſs and confidence in the ſoul. Chriſt is dead, and his death hath ſatisfied for my ſin. Chriſt is dead, therefore my ſoul ſhall never die. Who ſhall ſeparate me from the love of God? Theſe are the fruits, and this is the nature of that remembrance of Chriſt here ſpoken of.

---

* Great is the bitterneſs of ſin, which cauſed ſo much bitterneſs of ſuffering. *Aug.*

† When you look to the Lord, do you think yourſelf converſant among mortals, and not rather tranſported, as it were, inſtantly into heaven. *Chryſoſt. hom. 1.* 3.

Digitized by Google

Secondly, What aptitude or condecency is there in this ordinance, to bring Christ so to remembrance?

Much every way *; for it is a sign, by him appointed to that end, and hath (as divines well observe) a threefold use and consideration, viz. as it is *memorative*, *significative*, and *instructive*.

1. As it is *memorative*, and so it hath the nature and use of a pledge or token of love, left by a dying to a dear surviving friend. And so the sacrament, as was said before, is like a ring pluckt off from Christ's finger, or a bracelet from his arm; or rather his picture from his breast, delivered to us with such words as these; "As oft as you look on this, remember me: let this help to keep "me alive in your remembrance when I am gone, and out of "your sight." It induces to it also,

2. As it is a *significative* sign, most aptly signifying both his bitter sufferings for us, and our strict and intimate union with him; both which have an excellent usefulness to move the heart, and its deepest affections, at the remembrance of it. The breaking of the bread, and shedding forth the wine, signify the former; our eating, drinking, and incorporating them, is a lively signification of the other.

3. Moreover, this ordinance hath an excellent use and advantage for this affectionate remembrance of Christ, as it is an *instructive* sign. And it many ways instructs us, and enlightens our mind, particularly in these truths, which are very affecting things.

1. That Christ is the bread on which our souls live, proper meat and drink for believers, the most excellent New-Testament food. It is said, Psal. lxxviii. 25. "Man did eat angels food:" he means the manna that fell from heaven, which was so excellent, that if angels, who are the noblest creatures, did live upon material food, they would chuse this above all to feed on. And yet this was but a type and weak shadow of Christ, on whom believers feed. Christ makes a royal feast of his own flesh and blood, Isa. xxv. 6. all our delicates are in him.

2. It instructs us that the New Testament is now in its full force, and no substantial alteration can be made in it, since the testator is dead, and by his death hath ratified it. So that all the excellent promises and blessings of it are now fully confirmed to the believing soul, Heb. ix. 16, 17. All these, and many more choice truths, are we instructed in by this sign: And all these ways it remembers us of Christ, and helps powerfully to raise, warm, and effect our hearts with that remembrance of him.

* As oft as this supper is celebrated, so oft Christ, as it were, is beheld dying on the cross. *Aug. in Psal.* xxi.

Digitized by Google

Thirdly, The laſt enquiry is, How Chriſt hath, hereby, left ſuch a ſpecial mark of his care for, and love to his people. And that will evidently appear, if you conſider theſe five particulars.

1. This is a ſpecial mark of the care and love of Chriſt, in as much as hereby he hath made abundant proviſion for the confirmation and eſtabliſhment of the faith of his people, to the end of the world. For this being an evident proof that the New Teſtament is in its full force, (Matth. xxvi. 28. "This is the cup of "the New Teſtament in my blood") it tends as much to our ſatisfaction, as the legal execution of a deed, by which we hold and enjoy our eſtate. So that when he ſaith, *Take, eat*, it is as much as if God ſhould ſtand before you at the table with Chriſt, and all the promiſes in his hand; and ſay, *I deliver this to thee as my deed.* What think you, doth this promote and confirm the faith of a believer? if it doth not, what doth?

2. This is a ſpecial mark of Chriſt's care and love, in as much as by this he hath made like abundant proviſion for the enlargement of the joy and comfort of his people. Believers are at this ordinance, as Mary was at the ſepulchre, *with fear and great joy*, Matth xxviii. 8. Come, reader, ſpeak thy heart, if thou be one that heartily loveſt Jeſus Chriſt, and haſt gone many days, poſſibly years, mourning and lamenting becauſe of the inevidence and cloudineſs of thine intereſt in him; who haſt ſought him ſorrowing, in this ordinance, and in that, in one duty, and another: if at laſt Chriſt ſhould take off that maſk, that cruel covering (as one calls it) from his face, and be known of thee in breaking of bread: ſuppoſe he ſhould, by his Spirit, whiſper thus in thine ear as thou ſitteſt at his table, *Doſt thou indeed ſo prize, eſteem, and value me? Will nothing but Chriſt and his love content and ſatisfy thee? then, as ſweet, lovely, and deſirable as I am, know that I am thine; take thine own Chriſt into the arms of thy faith this day:* Would not this create in thy ſoul, a joy tranſcendant to all the joys and pleaſures in this world? What thinkeſt thou of it?

3. Here is a ſignal mark of Chriſt's care and love, in as much as this is one of the higheſt, and beſt helps for the mortification of the corruption of his people. Nothing tends more to the killing of ſin, than this doth. Chriſt's blood, as it is food to faith, ſo it is poiſon to our luſts. O what a pill is wrapt up in that bread! what an excellent potion is in that cup to purge the ſoul? One calls that table, an altar, on which our corruptions are ſacrificed and ſlain before the Lord. For how can they that there ſee what Chriſt ſuffered for ſin, live any longer therein?

4. Moreover his care and love appear in providing an ordinance ſo excellently adapted, to excite and blow up his people's love into a lively flame. When Joſeph made himſelf known to his bre-

Digitized by Google

thren, "I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold, be not griev-"ed;" O! what showers of tears and dear affections were there? how did they fall upon each others necks! so that the Egyptians wondered at the matter. How doth the soul (if I may so speak) passionately love Jesus Christ at such a time? O what a Christ is my Christ! "The fairest among ten thousand." What hath he done, what hath he suffered for me! what great things hath my Jesus given, and what great things hath he forgiven me! A world, a thousand worlds cannot shew such another. Here the soul is melted down by love at his feet; it is pained with love.

5. To conclude; Christ's care and love are further manifested to his people, in this ordinance, as it is one of the strongest bonds of union betwixt them that can be: 1 Cor. x. 17. "We being "many, are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of "that one bread." And though, through our corruptions, it falls out, that what was intended for a *bond of union* proves a *bone of contention*, yet, in as much as by this it appears how dearly Christ loved them; for as much also as here they are sealed up to the same inheritance, their dividing corruptions here slain, their love to Christ, and consequently to each other, here improved; it is certainly one of the strongest ties in the world, to wrap up gracious hearts in a bundle of love.

And thus I have dispatched the doctrinal part of this point. The improvement of it is in the following inferences.

Inference 1. Did Christ leave this ordinance with his church to preserve his remembrance among his people: *Then surely Christ foresaw, that, notwithstanding what he is, hath done, suffered, and promised yet to do for his people, they will for all this be still apt to forget him.*

A man would think that such a Christ should never be one whole hour together out of his people's thoughts and affections: that wherever they go, they should carry him up and down with them, in their thoughts, desires, and delights: that they should let their thoughts work towards Christ as the longing thoughts of her that is with child do work after that she longs for: that they should lie down with Christ in their thoughts at night, and when they awake be still with him: that their very dreams in the night should be sweet visions of Christ, and all their words savour of Christ.

But O the baseness of these hearts! Here we live and converse in a world of sensible objects, which, like a company of thieves, rob us of our Christ, and lay the dead child in his room. Wo is me, that it should be so with me, who am so obliged to love him! Though he be in the highest glory in heaven, he doth not forget us; he hath graven us upon the palms of his hands; we are con-

Digitized by Google

tinually before him. He thinks on us, when we forget him. The whole honour and glory paid him in heaven by the angels, cannot divert his thoughts one moment from us; but every trifle that meets us in the way, is enough to divert our thoughts from him. Why do we not abhor and loathe ourselves for this? What! Is it a pain, a burden, to carry Christ in our thoughts about the world? As much a burden, if thy heart be spiritual, as a bird is burdened by carrying his own wings.

Will such thoughts intrude unseasonably, and thrust greater things than Christ out of our minds? For shame, Christian, for shame, let not thy heart play the wanton, and gad from Christ after every vanity. In heaven nothing else takes up the thoughts of saints to eternity; and yet there is no tiring, no satiety. O learn to live nearer that heavenly life. Never leave praying and striving, till thou canst say as it is, Psal. lxiii. 5. "My soul shall be satisfied "as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise thee "with joyful lips; whilst I remember thee on my bed, and medi-"tate on thee in the night-watches."

Inf. 2. Hence also we infer, that *sacrament-seasons are heart-melting seasons;* because therein the most affecting and heart-melting recognitions and representations of Christ are made. As the *gospel* offers him to the *ear*, in the most sweet, affecting sounds of grace; so the *sacrament* to the *eye*, in the most pleasing visions that are on this side heaven.

There, hearts that will not yield a tear under other ordinances, can pour out floods: Zech. xii. 10. "They shall look upon me "whom they have pierced, and mourn." Yet I dare not affirm, that every one whose heart is broken by the believing sight of Christ there, can evidence that it is so by a dropping eye. No, we may say of tears, as it is said of love, Cant. viii. 7. If some Christians would give all the treasures of their houses for them, they cannot be purchased: yet they are truly humbled for sin, and seriously affected with the grace of Christ. For the support of such, I would distinguish, and have them to do so also, betwixt what is *essential* to spiritual sorrow, and what is *contingent*. Deep displeasure with thyself for sin, hearty resolutions and desires of the complete mortification of it, this is essential to all spiritual sorrow; but tears are accidental, and in some constitutions rarely found. If thou hast the former, trouble not thyself for want of the latter, though it is a mercy when they kindly and undissemb-bledly flow from a heart truly broken.

And surely, to see who it is that thy sins have pierced, how great, how glorious, how wonderful a Person that was, that was so humbled, abased, and brought to the dust, for such a wretched thing as thou art, cannot but tenderly affect the considering soul

Digitized by Google

If it was for a lamentation in the captivity, "that princes were hanged "ed up by the hands, and the faces of the elders not reverenced," Lam. v. 12. And if at the death of Abner, David could lament, and say, "a prince, and a great man is fallen in Israel this day," 2 Sam. iii. 38. If he could pathetically lament the death of Saul and Jonathan, saying, "Daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who "clothed you in scarlet; the beauty of Israel is slain upon the "high places!" Ah! how much more should it affect us, to see the beauty of heaven fallen, the Prince of life hang dead upon a tree! O let the place where you assemble to see this sight of your crucified Jesus, be a Bochim, a place of lamentation.

Inf. 3. Morever hence it is evident, *that the believing and affectionate remembrance of Christ, is of singular advantage at all times to the people of God.* For it is the immediate end of one of the greatest ordinances that ever Christ appointed to the church.

To have frequent recognitions of Christ, will appear to be singularly efficacious and useful to believers, if you consider,

1. If at any time the heart be dead and hard, this is the likeliest means in the world to dissolve, melt, and quicken it. Look hither hard heart; hard indeed if this hammer will not break it. Behold the blood of Jesus.

2. Art thou easily overcome by temptations to sin? This is the most powerful restraint in the world from sin: Rom. vi. 2. "How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" We are crucified with Christ, what have we to do with sin? Have such a thought as this, when thy heart is yielding to temptation. How can I do this, and crucify the Son of God afresh! Hath he not suffered enough already on earth; shall I yet make him groan as it were for me in heaven! Look, as David poured the water brought from the well of Bethlehem, on the ground, though he was athirst, for he said, it is the blood of the men; i. e. they eminently hazarded their lives to fetch it; much more should a Christian pour out upon the ground, yea, despise and trample under foot, the greatest profit or pleasure of sin; saying, Nay, I will have nothing to do with it, I will on no terms touch it, for it is the blood of Christ: it cost blood, infinite, precious blood to expiate it. If there were a knife in your house that had been thrust to the heart of your father, you would not take pleasure to see that knife, much less to use it.

3. Are you afraid your sins are not pardoned, but still stand upon account before the Lord? What more relieving, what more satisfying, than to see the cup of the New Testament in the blood of Christ, which is "shed for many for the remission of sins? "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is "Christ that died."

Digitized by Google

4. Are you ſtaggered at your ſufferings, and hard things you muſt endure for Chriſt in this world? Doth the fleſh ſhrink back from theſe things, and cry, ſpare thyſelf? What is there in the world more likely to ſteel and fortify thy ſpirit with reſolution and courage, than ſuch a ſight as this? Did Chriſt face the wrath of men, and the wrath of God too? Did he ſtand as a pillar of braſs, with unbroken patience, and ſtedfaſt reſolution, under ſuch troubles as never met in the like height upon any mere creature, till death beat the laſt breath out of his noſtrils? And ſhall I ſhrink for a trifle? Ah, he did not ſerve me ſo! I will arm myſelf with the like mind, 1 Pet. ii. 2.

5. Is thy faith ſtaggered at the promiſes? Canſt thou not reſt upon a promiſe? Here is what will help thee againſt hope to believe in hope, giving glory to God. For this is God's ſeal added to his covenant, which ratifies and binds faſt all that God hath ſpoken.

6. Doſt thou idle away precious time vainly, and live unuſefully to Chriſt in thy generation? What more apt both to convince and cure thee, than ſuch remembrance of Chriſt as this? O when thou conſidereſt thou art not thine own, thy time, thy talents are not thine own, but Chriſt's; when thou ſhalt ſee thou art bought with a price (a great price indeed) and ſo art ſtrictly obliged to glorify God, with thy ſoul and body, which are his, 2 Cor. v. 14. This will powerfully awaken a dull, ſluggiſh, and lazy ſpirit. In a word, what grace is there that this remembrance of Chriſt cannot quicken? What ſin cannot it mortify? What duty cannot it animate? O it is of ſingular uſe in all caſes to the people of God.

Inf. 4. Laſtly we infer; *Though all other things do, yet Chriſt neither doth, nor can grow ſtale.* Here is an ordinance to preſerve his remembrance freſh to the end of the world. The blood of Chriſt doth never dry up. The beauty of this roſe of Sharon is never loſt or withered. He is the ſame yeſterday, to-day, and for ever. As his body in the grave ſaw no corruption, ſo neither can his love, or any of his excellencies. When the ſaints ſhall have fed their eyes upon him in heaven, thouſands and millions of years, he ſhall be as freſh, beautiful, and orient as at the beginning. Other beauties have their prime, and their fading time; but Chriſt abides eternally. Our delight in creatures is often moſt at firſt acquaintance; when we come nearer to them, and ſee more of them, the edge of our delight is abated: but the longer you know Chriſt, and the nearer you come to him, ſtill the more do you ſee of his glory. Every farther proſpect of Chriſt entertains the mind with a freſh delight. He is as it were a new Chriſt every day, and yet the ſame Chriſt ſtill.

Bleſſed be God for Jeſus Chriſt.

Digitized by Google

SERMON XXII.

The third preparative Act of Christ for his own Death.

LUKE xxii. 41, 42, 43, 44.

And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, saying, Father, If thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done. And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

THE hour is now almost come, even that hour of sorrow, which Christ had so often spoken of. Yet a little, a very little while, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. He hath affectionately recommended his children to his Father. He hath set his house in order, and ordained a memorial of his death to be left with his people, as you have heard. There is but one thing more to do, and then the tragedy begins. He recommended us, he must also recommend himself by prayer to the Father; and when that is done, he is ready, let Judas with the black guard come when they will.

This last act of Christ's preparation for his own death, is contained in this scripture; wherein we have an account, 1. Of his prayer. 2. Of the agony attending it. 3. His relief in that agony, by an angel that came and comforted him.

1. The prayer of Christ; in a praying posture he will be found when the enemy comes; he will be taken upon his knees: he was pleading hard with God in prayer, for strength to carry him through this heavy trial, when they came to take him. And this prayer was a very remarkable prayer, both for the *solitariness* of it, he withdrew about a stone's cast, verse 41. from his dearest intimates, no ear but his Father's shall hear what he had now to say: and for the *vehemency* and importunity of it: these were those κραυγας, Heb. v. 7. strong cries that he poured out to God in the days of his flesh. And for the *humility* expressed in it; he fell upon the ground, he rolled himself as it were in the dust, at his Father's feet. And in divers other respects it was a very remarkable prayer, as you will hear anon.

2. This scripture gives you also an account of the agony of Christ, as well as of his prayer, and that a most strange one: such as in all respects never was known before in nature. It was a sweat as it had been blood, which, [as] is neither an hyperbole, as some would make it; nor yet a similitude of blood, as others fancy,

Digitized by Google

but a real bloody ſweat. For ſo [as] is ſometimes taken for the very thing itſelf, as John i. 14. And as a * worthy divine of our own well notes, that if the Holy Ghoſt had only intended it for a ſimilitude or reſemblance, he would rather have expreſſed it, *as it were drops of water*, than *as it were drops of blood*, for ſweat more reſembles water than blood.

3. You have here his relief in this his agony, and that by an angel diſpatched poſt from heaven to comfort him. The Lord of angels now needed the comfort of an angel. It was time to have a little refreſhment when his face and body too ſtood as full of drops of blood, as the drops of dew are upon the graſs. Hence we note,

Doct. *That our Lord Jeſus Chriſt was praying to his Father in an extraordinary agony, when they came to apprehend him in the garden.*

To open and explain this laſt act of preparation on Chriſt's part for our uſe. I ſhall at this time ſpeak of theſe particulars. *Firſt*, The *place* where he prayed. *Secondly*, The *time* when he prayed. *Thirdly*, The *matter* of his prayer. And *laſtly*, The *manner* how he prayed.

Firſt, For the circumſtance of *place*†, where was this laſt and remarkable prayer poured out to God? It was in the garden: St Matthew tells us it was called Gethſemane, which ſignifies (as Pareus on the place obſerves) "the valley of fatneſs, *viz.* of olives, "which grew in that valley or garden moſt plentifully." This garden lay very near to the city of Jeruſalem. The city had twelve gates, five of which were on the eaſt ſide of it, among which the moſt remarkable were the *fountain gate*, ſo called of the fountain Siloe. Through this gate Chriſt rode into the city in triumph, when he came from Bethany. The other was the *ſheep-gate*, ſo called from the multitude of ſheep driven in at it for the ſacrifice, for it ſtood cloſe by the temple; and cloſe by this gate was the garden called Gethſemane, where they apprehended Chriſt, and led him through this gate, as a ſheep to the ſlaughter. Betwixt this garden and the city, ran the brook Cedron, which roſe from a hill upon the ſouth, and ran upon the eaſt part of the city, between Jeruſalem and the mount of olives: and over this brook Chriſt paſſed into the garden, John xviii. 1. To which the Pſalmiſt alludes in Pſal. cx. 7. "He ſhall drink of the brook in "the way; therefore he ſhall lift up the head." For this brook run-

* Mr Ambroſe, Looking to Jeſus.

† *In locum Gethſemane, Gr.* χωριον; *reddunt villam, vel prædium dictum Gethſemane, Heb.* גית שמנים *quod ſonat vallem pinguium, nempe olearum, quæ nimirum ibi ubertim provenirebant.* Par.

Digitized by Google

ning through the valley of Jehoſaphat, that fertile ſoil, together with the filth of the city, which it waſhed away, gave the waters a black tincture, and ſo fitly reſembled thoſe grievous ſufferings of Chriſt, in which he taſted both the wrath of God and men.

Now, Chriſt went not into this garden to hide, or ſhelter himſelf from his enemies. No, that was not his end; for if ſo, it had been the moſt improper place he could have choſen, it being the accuſtomed place where he was wont to pray, and a place well known to Judas, who was now coming to ſeek him, as you may ſee, John xviii. 2. "And Judas, which betrayed him, knew the "place, for Jeſus oft times reſorted thither with his diſciples." So that he repairs thither, not to ſhun, but to meet the enemy; to offer himſelf as a prey to the wolves, which there found him, and laid hold upon him. He alſo reſorted thither for an hour or two of privacy before they came, that he might there freely pour out his ſoul to God. So much for the circumſtances of place where he prayed.

Secondly, We ſhall conſider the *time* when he entered into this garden to pray*: and it was in the ſhutting in of the evening: for it was after the paſſover and the ſupper were ended. Then (as Matthew hath it, chap. xxvi. 36.) Jeſus went over the brook into the garden, betwixt the hours of nine and ten in the evening, as it is conjectured; and ſo he had betwixt two and three hours time to pour out his ſoul to God. For it was about midnight that Judas and the ſoldiers came and apprehended him there. So that it being immediately before his apprehenſion, it ſhews us in what frame and poſture Chriſt deſired to be found: and by it he left us an excellent pattern, what we ought to do, when imminent dangers are near us, even at the door. It becomes a ſoldier to die fighting, "and a miniſter to die preaching†," and a Chriſtian to die praying. If they come, they will find Chriſt upon his knees, wreſtling mightily with God by prayer. He never ſpent one moment of the time of his life idly; but theſe were the laſt moments he had to live in the world, and here you may ſee how they were filled up and employed.

Thirdly, Next let us conſider the *matter* of his prayer, or the things about which he poured out his ſoul to God in the garden, that evening. And verſe 42. informs us what that was: he prayed, ſaying, "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me; "nevertheleſs, not my will, but thine be done." Theſe words

* At that time, viz. at the approach of the evening, after the celebration of the Paſſover and Euchariſt, having given thanks, they ſang a hymn. *Par. in locum.*

† *Oportet theologum concionantem mori.*

Digitized by Google

are involved in many difficulties, as Christ himself was when he uttered them. By the *cup*, understand that portion of sorrows then to be distributed to him by his Father. Great afflictions and bitter trials are frequently expressed, in scripture, under the metaphor of a cup. So, that dreadful storm of wrath upon the wicked, in Psal. xi. 6. "Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, "fire, and brimstone, and a horrible tempest; this shall be the por-"tion of their cup," i. e. the punishment allotted to them by God for their wickedness. And an exceeding great misery, by a large or deep cup. So Ezek. xxiii. 32, 33. "Thou shalt drink "of thy sisters cup deep and large: thou shalt be laughed to "scorn, and had in derision; it containeth much. Thou shalt "be filled with drunkenness and sorrow, with the cup of astonish-"ment and desolation, with the cup of thy sister Samaria." And when an affliction is compounded of many bitter ingredients, stinging and aggravating considerations and circumstances, then it is said to be mixed. "In the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and "the wine is red, (noting a bloody trial) it is full of mixture, and "he poureth out the same, but the dregs thereof all the wicked "of the earth shall wring them out, and drink them:" i. e. they shall have the worst part of the judgment for their share. Thus, afflictions and calamities are expressed by the metaphor of a cup; great calamities by a deep and large cup; afflictions compounded of many aggravating circumstances, by a mixed cup. And from the effect it hath on those that must drink it, is called a cup of trembling, Isa. lvii. 17. "Thou hast drunken at the hand of the "Lord, the cup of his fury, the dregs of the cup of trembling." Such a cup now was Christ's cup; a cup of wrath; a large and deep cup, that contained more wrath than ever was drunk by any creature, even the wrath of an infinite God. A mixed cup, mixed with God's wrath and man's in the extremity. And all the bitter aggravating circumstances that ever could be imagined; great consternation and amazement; this was the portion of his cup.

By the *passing of the cup* from him, understand his exemption from suffering that dreadful and horrid wrath of God, which he foresaw to be now at hand. For as the coming of the cup to a man, doth, in scripture-phrase, note his bearing and suffering of evil, as you find it, Lam. iv. 21. "Rejoice and be glad, O daugh-"ter of Edom, that dwellest in the land of Uz; the cup also "shall pass through unto thee; thou shalt be drunken, and make "thyself naked;" which is an ironical reproof of the Idumeans, the deadly enemies of the Jews, who wickedly insulted over them, when the cup was at their mouths: as if the Lord had said, you have laughed and jeered at my people, when my hand was on

Digitized by Google

them; you rejoiced to see their calamities: well, make yourselves merry still if you can, the cup shall pass through unto thee; thy turn is coming, then laugh if thou canst. So, on the contrary, the passing away of the cup, notes freedom from, or our escaping of those miseries. And so Christ's meaning, in this conditional request, is, Father, if it be thy will, excuse me from this dreadful wrath; my soul is amazed at it. Is there no way to shun it? Cannot I be excused? Or if it be possible, spare me. This is the meaning of it. But then here is the difficulty, how Christ, who knew God had from everlasting determined he should drink it, who had compacted and agreed with him in the covenant of redemption so to do, who came (as himself acknowledges) for that end into the world, John xviii. 37. who foresaw this hour all along, and professed when he spake of this bloody baptism with which he was to be baptized, that he was "straitened till it was "accomplished," Luke xii. 50. How (I say) to reconcile all this with such a petition, that now when the cup was delivered to him, it might pass, or he excused from suffering; this is the knot, this is the difficulty.

What! did he now repent of his engagement? Was all he said before but a flourish, before he saw the enemy? Doth he now begin to wish to be disengaged, and that he had never undertaken such a work? Is that the meaning of it? No, no, Christ never repented of his engagement to the Father, never was willing to let the burden lie on us, rather than on himself; there was not such a thought in his holy and faithful heart; but the resolution of this doubt depends upon another distinction, which will clear his meaning in it.

1*st*, You must distinguish of prayers. Some are *absolute* and peremptory; and so to have prayed that the cup might pass, would have been chargeable with such absurdities, as were but now mentioned: others are *conditional* and submissive prayers, "If "it may be, if the Lord please." And such was this, if you be willing; if not, I will drink it. But you will say, Christ knew what was the mind of God in that case; he knew what transactions had of old been betwixt his Father and him; and therefore though he did not pray absolutely, yet it is strange he would pray conditionally it might pass. Therefore in the

2*d* Place, you must distinguish of the *natures* according to which Christ acted. He acted sometimes as God, and sometimes as man. Here he acted according to his human nature; simply expressing and manifesting in this request the reluctancy it had at such sufferings: wherein he shewed himself a true man, in shunning that which is destructive to his nature.

As Christ had two distinct natures, so two distinct wills. And

Digitized by Google

(as one well obſerves) in the life of Chriſt, there was an intermixture of power and weakneſs, of the divine glory, and human frailty. At his birth a ſtar ſhone, but he was laid in a manger. The Devil tempted him in the wilderneſs, but there angels miniſtered to him. As man he was deceived in the fig-tree, but as God he blaſted it. He was caught by the ſoldiers in the garden, but firſt made them fall back. So here, as man he feared and ſhunned death; but as God-man he willingly ſubmitted to it.

"It was (as * Deodatus well expreſſes it) a purely natural de-
"ſire, mere man, by which for a ſhort moment he apprehended
"and ſhunned death and torments; but quickly recalled himſelf
"to obedience, by a deliberate will, to ſubmit himſelf to God.
"And beſides that, this deſire was but conditional, under the will
"of God, accepted by Chriſt; but from the contemplation of
"which he was a while diverted by the extremity of horrors:
"therefore there was no ſin in it, but only a ſhort conflict of na-
"ture, preſently overcome by reaſon, and a firm will; or a ſmall
"ſuſpenſion, quickly overcome by a moſt ſtrong reſolution. Fi-
"nally, this ſacred deliberation in Jeſus was not made ſimply, or
"in an inſtant, but with a ſhort time, and with a counterpoiſe,
"which is the natural property of the ſoul in its motions, and vo-
"luntary actions."

In a word, as there was nothing of ſin in it, it being a pure and ſinleſs affection of nature; ſo there was much good in it, and that both as it was a part of his ſatisfaction for our ſin, to ſuffer inwardly ſuch fears, tremblings, and conſternations: and as it was a clear evidence, that he was in all things made like unto his brethren, except ſin. And laſtly, as it ſerves notably to expreſs the grievouſneſs and extremity of Chriſt's ſufferings, whoſe very proſpect and appearance, at ſome diſtance, was ſo dreadful to him.

If the learned reader deſire to ſee what is further ſaid on this point, let him read what the judicious and learned Parker, in his excellent book *de deſcenſu*†, hath collected upon that caſe.

Fourthly, Let us conſider the *manner* how he prayed, and that was,

1. *Solitarily*, He doth not here pray in the audience of his diſciples, as he had done before, but went at a diſtance from them. He had now private buſineſs to tranſact with God. He left ſome of them at the entering into the garden; and for Peter, James, and John, that went farther with him than the reſt, he bids them remain there, while he went and prayed‡. He did not deſire

* *Deodati Annot.* in Mat. xxvi. 39.

† *Parker de deſcenſu, lib.* 3. *p.* 192, &c.

‡ He ſeeks relief to grief, by prayer, in which, that he might be more at liberty, he retires a little.

Digitized by Google

them to pray with him, or for him; no, he must tread the wine-press alone. Nor will he have them with him, possibly lest it should discourage them to see and hear how he groaned, sweat, trembled, and cried, as one in an agony, to his Father.

Reader, there are times and cases, when a Christian would not be willing, that the dearest and most intimate friend he hath in the world, should be privy to what passes betwixt him and his God.

2. It was an *humble* prayer; that is evident by the postures into which he cast himself: sometimes kneeling, and sometimes prostrate upon his face. He creeps in the very dust, lower he cannot fall; and his heart was as low as his body. He is meek and lowly indeed.

3. It was a *reiterated* prayer; he prays, and then returns to the disciples, as a man in extremity turns every way for comfort: so Christ prays, "Father, let this cup pass," but in that the Father hears him not; though as to support he was heard. Being denied deliverance by his Father, he goes and bemoans himself to his pensive friends, and complains bitterly to them, "my soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death." He would ease himself a little, by opening his condition to them; but alas, they rather increase than ease his burden. For he finds them asleep, which occasioned that gentle reprehension from him, Mat. xxvi. 40. "What, could you not watch with me one hour?" What, not *watch* with *me?* Who may expect it from you more than I? Could you not *watch?* I am going to *die* for you, and *cannot you watch* with me? What! cannot you watch with me *one hour?* Alas! what if I had required great matters from you? What! not an *hour*, and that the parting hour too! Christ finds no ease from them, and back again he goes to that sad place, which he had stained and purpled with a bloody sweat, and prays to the same purpose again. O how he returns upon God over and over, as if he resolved to take no denial! But, however, considering it must be so, he sweetly falls in with his Father's will, *Thy will be done.*

4. And lastly, It was a prayer accompanied with a strange and wonderful agony: so saith verse 44. "and being in an agony, he "prayed more earnestly; and his sweat was as it were great drops "of blood falling down to the ground." Now he was red indeed in his apparel, as one that trod the wine-press. "It was not a "faint thin dew, but a clotted sweat *, θρομβοι αιματος," clodders of blood falling upon the ground. It is disputed whether this sweat was natural or preternatural. That some in extremity have sweat a kind of bloody thin dew, is affirmed. I remember † Thuanus

* *Non fuit sudor diaphoreticus, sed crassus et grumosus.*

† *Dux quidem indigno mortis motu adeo concussus in animo fuit, ut sanguineum sudorem ex corpore fudit.* Thuan. lib. 11.

Digitized by Google

gives us two inſtances that come neareſt to this, of any thing I ever obſerved or heard of. "The one was a captain, who by a "cowardly and unworthy fear of death was ſo overwhelmed with "anguiſh, that a kind of bloody dew or ſweat ſtood on all his bo-"dy. * The other is of a young man condemned for a ſmall "matter to die by Sixtus V. who poured out tears of blood from "his eyes, and ſweat blood from his whole body."

Theſe are rare and ſtrange inſtances, and the truth of them depends upon the credit of the relator; but certainly for Chriſt, whoſe body had the moſt excellent craſis and temperament, to ſweat clotted blood, or globules of blood, as ſome render it; and that in a cold night, when others needed a fire within doors to keep them warm, John xviii. 18. I ſay, for him to ſweat ſuch ſtreams through his garments, falling to the ground on which he lay, muſt be concluded a preternatural thing. And indeed, it was not wonderful that ſuch a preternatural ſweat ſhould ſtream from all parts of his body, if you do but conſider what an extraordinary load preſſed his ſoul at that time, even ſuch as no mere man felt, or was able to ſtand under, even the wrath of a great and terrible God, in the extremity of it. "Who (ſaith the prophet Nahum, chap. i. 6.) "can ſtand before his indignation? And who can abide in the "fierceneſs of his anger? His fury is poured out like fire, and "the rocks are thrown down by him."

The effects of this wrath, as it fell at this time upon the ſoul of Chriſt in the garden, are largely and very emphatically expreſſed by the ſeveral Evangeliſts who wrote this tragedy. Matthew tells us, his ſoul was "exceeding ſorrowful, even unto death," Matth. xxvi. 38. "The word † ſignifies beſet with grief round about." And it is well expreſſed by that phraſe of the pſalmiſt, "The ſor-"rows of death compaſſed me about, the pains of hell got hold "upon me." Mark varies the expreſſion, and gives it us in another word no leſs ſignificant and full, Mark xiv. 33. "He began "to be ſore amazed and very heavy," ‡ "Sore amazed, it imports "ſo high a degree of conſternation and amazement, as when the "hair of the head ſtands up through fear." Luke hath another expreſſion for it in the text; he was ἐν ἀγωνίᾳ, *in an agony.* An agony is the labouring and ſtriving of nature in extremity. And John gives it us in another expreſſion, John xii. 27. "Now is my

* *Juvenis ob levem caſum, a Sixto V. ad mortem damnatus, præ doloris vehementia, lacrymas cruentas ſudaſſe, et ſanguinem pro ſudore e toto corpore mittere viſus eſt.* Thuan. lib. 80.

† Περίλυπος, *undequaque triſtis.* Beza.

‡ Ἐκθαμβεῖσθαι, *medici vocant horripilationem:* καὶ ἀδημονεῖν, *graviſſime angebatur.* Beza.

Digitized by Google

"soul troubled." The original word is a very full word. And it is conceived the Latins derive that word which signifies hell, from this, by which Christ's troubles are here expressed*. This was the load which oppressed his soul, and so straitned it with fear and grief, that his eyes could not vent or ease sufficiently by tears; but the innumerable pores of his body are set open, to give vent by letting out streams of blood. And yet all this while, no hand of man was upon him. This was but a prelude, as it were, to the conflict that was at hand. This bloody sweat in which he prayed, was but as the giving or sweating of the stones before a great rain. Now he stood as it were, arraigned at God's bar, and had to do immediately with him. And you know "it is a fearful thing to fall into the "hands of the living God." The uses of this follow in this order.

Inference 1. Did Christ pour out his soul to God so ardently in the garden, when the hour of his trouble was at hand? Hence we infer, *That prayer is a singular preparative for, and relief under, the greatest troubles.*

It is sweet, when troubles find us in the way of our duty. The best posture we can wrestle with afflictions in, is to engage them upon our knees. The naturalist tells us, if a lion find a man prostrate, he will do him no harm. Christ hastened to the garden to pray, when Judas and the soldiers were hastening thither to apprehend him. O! when we are nigh to danger, it is good for us to draw nigh to our God. Then should we be urging that seasonable request to God, Psal. xxii. 11. "Be not far from me, "for trouble is near; for there is none to help." Wo be to him, whom death or trouble finds afar off from God. And as prayer is the best preparative for troubles, so the choicest relief under them. Griefs are eased by groans. The heart is cooled and disburdened by spiritual evaporations. You know it is some relief if a man can pour out his complaint into the bosom of a faithful friend, though he can but pity him: how much more to pour out our complaints into the bosom of a faithful God, who can both pity and help us! Luther was wont to call prayers the leeches of his cares and sorrows; they suck out the bad blood. It is the title of Psal. cii. *A prayer for the afflicted, when he is overwhelmed, and poureth out his complaint before the Lord.* It is no small ease to open our hearts to God. When we are as full of grief, as Elihu was of matter, let us say as he did, Job xxxii. 19. "Behold, Lord, my "heart is as wine which hath no vent, it is ready to burst as new "bottles. I will speak that I may be refreshed."

* Τεταρταται, *unde Tartarus, quia terret omnia.*

Digitized by Google

To go to God when thou art full of ſorrow, when thy heart is ready to burſt within thee, as it was with Chriſt in this day of his trouble; and ſay, Father, thus and thus the caſe ſtands with thy poor child; and ſo and ſo it is with me; I will not go up and down complaining from one creature to another, it is to no purpoſe to do ſo; nor yet will I leave my complaint upon myſelf: but I will tell thee, Father, how the caſe ſtands with me; for to whom ſhould children make their moan, but to their Father? Lord, I am oppreſſed, undertake for me. What thinkeſt thou, reader, of this? Is it relieving to a ſad ſoul? Yes, yes; if thou be a Chriſtian that haſt had any experience this way, thou wilt ſay there is nothing like it; thou wilt bleſs God for appointing ſuch an ordinance as prayer, and ſay, Bleſſed be God for prayer: I know not what I ſhould have done, nor how in all the world I ſhould have waded through the troubles I have paſſed, if it had not been for the help of prayer.

Inf. 2. Did Chriſt withdraw from the diſciples to ſeek God by prayer? Thence it follows, *That the company of the beſt men is not always ſeaſonable.* Peter, James, and John, were three excellent men, and yet Chriſt ſaith to them, Tarry ye here, while I go and pray yonder. The ſociety of men is beautiful in its ſeaſon, and no better than a burden out of ſeaſon. I have read of a good man, that when his ſtated time for cloſet-prayer was come, he would ſay to the company that were with him, whatever they were, *Friends, I muſt beg your excuſe for a while, there is a friend waits to ſpeak with me.* The company of a good man is good, but it ceaſes to be ſo, when it hinders the enjoyment of better company. One hour with God is to be preferred to a thouſand days enjoyment of the beſt men on earth. If thy deareſt friends in the world intrude unſeaſonably betwixt thee and thy God, it is neither rude nor unmannerly to bid them give place to better company; I mean, to withdraw from them, as Chriſt did from the diſciples, to enjoy an hour with God alone. In public and private duties we may admit of the company of others to join with us; and if they be ſuch as fear God, the more the better: but in ſecret duties, Chriſt and thou muſt whiſper it over betwixt yourſelves; and then the company of the wife of thy boſom, or thy friend, that is as thine own ſoul, would not be welcome. "When thou prayeſt, enter into "thy cloſet; and when thou haſt ſhut thy door, pray to thy Fa- "ther which is in ſecret," Mat. vi. 6. It is as much as if Chriſt had ſaid, See all clear; be ſure to retire in as great privacy as may be; let no ear but God's hear what thou haſt to ſay to him. This is at once a good note of ſincerity, and a great help to ſpiritual liberty and freedom with God.

Inf. 3. Did Chriſt go to God thrice upon the ſame account?

Digitized by Google

Thence learn, *That Chriſtians ſhould not be diſcouraged, though they have ſought God once and again, and no anſwer of peace comes.* Chriſt was not heard the firſt time, and he goes a ſecond; he was not anſwered the ſecond, he goes the third and laſt time, yet was not anſwered in the thing he deſired, *viz.* that the cup might paſs from him; and yet he hath no hard thoughts of God, but reſolves his will into his Father's. If God deny you in the things you aſk, he deals no otherwiſe with you than he did with Chriſt. "O my God (ſaith he) I cry in the day-time, but thou heareſt "not; and in the night, and am not ſilent." Yet he juſtifies God, "but thou art holy," Pſal. xxii. 2. Chriſt was not heard in the thing he deſired, and yet heard in that he feared, Heb. v. 7.

The cup did not paſs as he deſired, but God upheld him, and enabled him to drink it. He was heard as to *ſupport*, he was not heard as to *exemption* from ſuffering: his will was expreſſed conditionally; and therefore though he had not the thing he ſo deſired, yet his will was not croſſed by the denial. But now, when we have a ſuit depending before the throne of grace, and cry to God once and again, and no anſwer comes; how do your hands hang down, and your ſpirits wax feeble!

Then we complain with the church, Lam. iii. 8. "When I cry "and ſhout, he ſhutteth out my prayers; thou covereſt thyſelf "with a cloud, that our prayers cannot paſs through." Then, with Jonah we conclude "we are caſt out of his ſight." Alas! we judge by ſenſe according to what we ſee and feel; and cannot live by faith on God, when he ſeems to hide himſelf, put us off, and refuſe our requeſts. It calls for an Abraham's faith, to "believe againſt hope, giving glory to God." If we cry, and no anſwer comes preſently, our carnal reaſon draws a headlong haſty concluſion. Sure I muſt expect no anſwer: God is angry with my prayers: The ſeed of prayer hath lain ſo long under the clods, and it appears not; ſurely it is loſt, I ſhall hear no more of it.

Our prayers may be heard, though their anſwer be for the preſent ſuſpended. As David acknowledged, when he coolly conſidered the matter, Pſal. xxxi. 22. "I ſaid in my haſte, I am cut "off from before thine eyes; nevertheleſs thou heardeſt the voice "of my ſupplication, when I cried unto thee." No, no, Chriſtian; a prayer ſent up in faith, according to the will of God, cannot be loſt, though it be delayed. We may ſay of it as David ſaid of Saul's ſword, and Jonathan's bow, that they never returned empty.

Inf. 4. Was Chriſt ſo earneſt in prayer, that he prayed himſelf into a very agony? *Let the people of God bluſh to think how unlike their ſpirits are to Chriſt, as to their prayer-frames.*

Digitized by Google

O what lively, ſenſible, quick, deep, and tender apprehenſions and ſenſe of thoſe things about which he prayed, had Chriſt? Though he ſaw his very blood ſtarting out from his hands, and his clothes died in it; yet being in an agony, he prayed the more earneſtly. I do not ſay Chriſt is imitable in this; no, but his fervour in prayer is a pattern for us, and ſerves ſeverely to rebuke the lazineſs, dulneſs, torpor, formality, and ſtupidity, that are in our prayers. How often do we bring the ſacrifice of the dead before the Lord! how often do our lips move, and our hearts ſtand ſtill! O how unlike Chriſt are we! his prayers were pleading prayers, full of mighty arguments and fervent affections. O that his people were in this more like him!

Inf. 5. Was Chriſt in ſuch an agony before any hand of man was upon him, merely from the apprehenſions of the wrath of God, with which he now conteſted? "Then ſurely it is a dread-"ful thing to fall into the hands of the living God; for our God "is a conſuming fire."

Ah, what is divine wrath, that Chriſt ſtaggered when the cup came to him! Could not he bear, and doſt thou think to bear it? Did Chriſt ſweat clots of blood at it, and doſt thou make light of it? Poor wretch, if it ſtaggered him, it will confound thee. If it made him groan, it will make thee howl, and that eternally. Come, ſinner, come; doſt thou make light of the threatenings of the wrath of God againſt ſin? Doſt thou think there is no ſuch matter in it, as theſe zealous preachers make of it? Come look here upon my text, which ſhews thee the face of the Son of God ſtanding as full of purple drops under the ſenſe and apprehenſion of it, as the drops of dew that hang upon the graſs. Hark how he cries, "Father if it be poſſible, let this cup paſs." O any thing of puniſhment rather than this. Hear what he tells the diſciples; "My ſoul, (ſaith he,) is ſorrowful even to death: amazed, and very heavy." Fools make a mock at ſin, and the threatenings that lie againſt it.

Inf. 6. Did Chriſt meet death with ſuch a heavy heart? *Let the hearts of Chriſtians be the lighter for this, when they come to die.* The bitterneſs of death was all ſqueezed into Chriſt's cup. He was made to drink up the very dregs of it, that ſo our death might be the ſweeter to us. Alas! there is nothing now left in death that is frightful or troubleſome, beſide the pain of diſſolution, that natural evil of it. I remember it is ſtoried of one of the martyrs, that being obſerved to be exceeding jocund and merry when he came to the ſtake, one aſked him, What was the reaſon his heart was ſo light, when death, (and that in ſuch a terrible form too) was before him? O ſaid he, my heart is ſo light at my death, becauſe Chriſt's was ſo heavy at his death.

Digitized by Google

Inf. 7. To conclude, what cauſe have all the ſaints to love their dear Lord Jeſus with an abounding love? Chriſtian, open the eyes of thy faith, and fix them upon Chriſt, in the poſture he lay in the garden, drenched in his own blood; and ſee whether he be not lovely in theſe his dyed garments. He that ſuffered for us more than any creature could or did, may well challenge more love than all the creatures in the world. O what hath he ſuffered, and ſuffered upon thy account! it was thy pride, earthlineſs, ſenſuality, unbelief, hardneſs of heart, that laid on more weight in that day that he ſweat blood.

SERMON XXIII.

The firſt Preparation for CHRIST's Death, on his Enemies' Part, by the Treaſon of *Judas*.

MATTH. xxvi. 47, 48, 49.

And while he yet ſpake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude, with ſwords and ſtaves, from the chief prieſts and elders of the people. Now he that betrayed him gave them a ſign, ſaying, Whomſoever I ſhall kiſs, that ſame is he; hold him faſt. And forthwith he came to Jeſus, and ſaid, Hail, maſter; and kiſſed him.

THE former ſermons give you an account how Chriſt improved every moment of his time, with buſy diligence, to make himſelf ready for his death. He hath commended his charge to the Father, inſtituted the bleſſed memorial of his death, poured out his ſoul to God in the garden, with reſpect to the grievous ſufferings he ſhould undergo; and now he is ready, and waits for the coming of the enemies, being firſt in the field.

And think you that they were idle on their parts? No, no, their malice made them reſtleſs. They had agreed with Judas to betray him. Under his conduct, a band of ſoldiers was ſent to apprehend him. The hour, ſo long expected, is come. For "while "he yet ſpake," ſaith the text, "lo, Judas, one of the twelve, "came, and with him a great multitude, with ſwords and "ſtaves."

Theſe words contain the firſt preparative act, on their part, for the death of Chriſt, even to betray him, and that by one of his own diſciples. Now they execute what they had plotted, ver. 14, 15. And in this paragraph you have an account, 1. Of the traitor, who he was. 2. Of the treaſon, what he did. 3. Of the man-

Digitized by Google

ner of its execution, how it was contrived and effected. Lastly, Of the time, when they put this hellish plot in execution.

1. We have here a description of the traitor: and it is remarkable how carefully the several Evangelists have described him, both by his name, surname, and office, "Judas, Judas Iscariot, Judas "Iscariot, one of the twelve;" that he might not be mistaken for "Jude or Judas the apostle. God is tender of the names and reputations of his upright-hearted servants. His office, "one of "the twelve," is added to aggravate the fact, and to shew how that prophecy was accomplished in him, Psal. xli. 9. "Yea, mine "own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my "bread, hath lift up his heel against me." Lo, this was the traitor, and this was his name and office.

2. You have a description of the treason, or an account what this man did. He led an armed multitude to the place where Christ was, gave them a signal to discover him, and encouraged them to lay hands on him, and hold him fast. This was that hellish design, which the devil put into his heart, working upon that principle, or lust of covetousness, which was predominant there. What will not a carnal heart attempt, if the devil suit a temptation to the predominant lust, and God withhold restraining grace!

3. You have here the way and manner in which the hellish plot was executed. It was managed both with *force* and with *fraud*. He comes with a multitude, armed with swords and staves, in case he should meet with any resistance. And he comes to him with a kiss, which was their signal, lest they should mistake the man. For they aimed neither at small nor great, save only, at the King of Israel, the King of glory*. Here was much ado, you see, to take a harmless Lamb, that did not once start from them, but freely offered himself to them.

4. And lastly, When this treasonable design was executed upon Christ. And it was executed upon him while he stood among his disciples, exhorting them to prayer and watchfulness, dropping heavenly and most seasonable counsels upon them. "While he yet "spake, lo, Judas, and with him a multitude, came with swords "and staves." Surely, it is no better than a Judas's trick, to disturb and afflict the servants of God in the discharge of their duties. This was the traitor and his treason; thus it was executed, and at this time. Hence we observe,

* What need was there of arms against one who was unarmed? who, if he had pleased to exert his power, could not be overcome by any arms. To what purpose was a sign? to prevent mistaking the person, because it was night. *D. Parus in loc.*

Digitized by Google

Doct. *That it was the lot of our Lord Jesus Christ, to be betrayed into the hands of his mortal enemies, by the assistance of a false and dissembling friend.*

Look, as Joseph was betrayed and sold by his brethren; David by Achitophel, his old friend; Samson by Delilah, that lay in his bosom; so Christ by Judas, one of the twelve; a man, his friend, his familiar, that had been so long conversant with him: he that by profession had lifted up his hand to Christ, now by treason lifts up his heel against him; he bids the soldiers bind those blessed hands, that not long before had washed the traitor's feet.

In the point before us, we will,

First, Consider Judas, according to that eminent station and place he had under Christ.

Secondly, We will consider his treason, according to the several aggravations of it.

Thirdly, We will enquire into the cause or motives that put him upon such a dreadful, hellish design as this was.

Fourthly, and lastly, We will view the issue, and see the event of this treason, both as to Christ and as to himself. And then apply it.

First, As for the person that did this, he was very eminent by reason of that dignity Christ had raised him to. For,

1. He was *one of the twelve*; one retained not in a more general, and common, but in the nearest, and most intimate and honourable relation and service to Jesus Christ. There were in Christ's time several sorts and ranks of persons that had relation to him. There were *secret disciples*; men that believed, but kept their stations, and abode with their relations in their callings. There were seventy also whom Christ sent forth; but none of these were so much with Christ or so eminent in respect of their place, as the twelve; they were Christ's family, day and night conversant with him: it was the highest dignity that was conferred upon any: and of this number was Judas. The ancients have much extolled the apostolical dignity. Some stiled these twelve, *pedes Christi*, the feet of Christ; because they, as it were, carried Christ up and down the world. Others, *oculi Dei*, the very eyes of God; they were his watchmen, that took care for the concernments of his name and gospel in the world. Others, *mammæ ecclesiæ*, the breasts of the church; they fed and nourished the children of God by their doctrine. Now, to be one of this number, one of the twelve, what a dignity was this.

2. Yea, he being one of the twelve, was daily conversant with Christ: often joined with him in prayer, often sat at his feet, hearing the gracious words that came out of his mouth. It was

Digitized by Google

one of Auſtin's three wiſhes, that he had ſeen Chriſt in the fleſh: Judas not only ſaw him but dwelt with him, travelled with him, and eat and drank with him. And during the whole time of his abode with him, all Chriſt's carriage towards him was very obliging and winning; yea, ſuch was the condeſcenſion of Chriſt to this wretched man, that he waſhed his feet, and that but a little before he betrayed him.

3. He was a man of unſuſpected integrity among the apoſtles. When Chriſt told them, One of you ſhall betray me; none thought on him, but every one rather ſuſpected himſelf; Lord, is it I? ſaith one, and ſo ſaid they all; but none pointed at Judas, ſaying, Thou art he.

4. To conclude, in ſome reſpect, he was preferred to the reſt. For he had not only a joint commiſſion with them to preach the goſpel to others, (though, poor unhappy wretch, himſelf became a caſt-away) but he had a peculiar office, he bare the bag, i. e. he was Almoner, or the ſteward of the family, to take care to provide for the neceſſary accommodations of Chriſt and them. Now who could ever have ſuſpected, that ſuch a man as this ſhould have ſold the blood of Chriſt for a little money? that ever he ſhould have proved a perfidious traitor to his Lord, who had called him, honoured him, and carried himſelf ſo tenderly towards him? And yet ſo it was; "Lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and "with him a multitude:" O whither will not a buſy devil and a bad heart carry a man!

Secondly, But what did this man do? and what are the juſt aggravations of his fact? Why, he moſt baſely and unworthily ſold and delivered Chriſt into his enemies hands, to be butchered and deſtroyed; and all this for thirty pieces of ſilver.

Bluſh, O heavens, and be aſtoniſhed, O earth, at this! In this fact, moſt black and horrid aggravations appear.

1. Judas had ſeen the majeſty of a God on him whom he betrayed. He had ſeen the miracles that Chriſt wrought, which none but Chriſt could do. He knew that by the finger of God he had raiſed the dead, caſt out devils, healed the ſick. He could not chuſe but obſerve and ſee the rays and awful beams of divine majeſty ſhining in his very face, in his doctrine, and in his life; to betray a man, to ſell the blood of the pooreſt innocent in the world, is horrid; but to ſell the blood of God, O what is this! Here is a wickedneſs that no epithet can match! Yea,

2. This wickedneſs he committed after perſonal warnings and premonitions given him by Chriſt. He had often told them in general, that one of them ſhould betray him, Mark xiv. 20. He alſo denounced a dreadful woe upon him that ſhould do it, ver. 21. "The Son of man goeth indeed, as it is written of him; but

Digitized by Google

" wo to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed; good had " it been for that man if he had never been born;" This was ſpoken in Judas's preſence. And one would have thought ſo dreadful a doom as Chriſt paſſed upon the man that ſhould attempt this, ſhould have affrighted him far enough from the thoughts of ſuch a wickedneſs. Nay, Chriſt comes nearer to him than this, and told him he was the man: For when Judas (who was the laſt that put the queſtion to Chriſt) aſked him, " Maſter, " is it I?" Chriſt's anſwer imports as much as a plain affirmation, " Thou haſt ſaid," Mat. xxvi. 25. Moreover,

3. He doth it not out of a blind zeal againſt Chriſt, as many of his other enemies did; of whom it is ſaid, 1 Cor. ii. 8. " That " had they known him, they would not have crucified the Lord " of glory:" but he did it for money, to make his market of Chriſt. He ſold Chriſt as a man would ſell an ox, or a ſheep to the butcher for profit He was fully of the mind of the Pope, whoſe motto was, " * The ſmell or ſavour of gain is ſweet, let it " ariſe out of what it will." If he can get any thing by Chriſt's blood, it ſhall be a vendible commodity with him. " What will " ye give me, (ſaith he), and I will betray him?" Mat. xxvi. 15.

4. He ſells him, and he ſells him at a low rate too; which ſhewed how vile an eſteem he had of Chriſt. He is content to part with him for thirty pieces of ſilver. If theſe pieces, or ſhekels, were the ſhekels of the ſanctuary, they amounted but to three pounds fifteen ſhillings†. But it is ſuppoſed they were the common ſhekels, which were moſtly uſed in buying and ſelling; and then his price, that he put upon the Saviour of the world, was but one pound ſeventeen ſhillings and ſixpence. A goodly price (as the prophet calls it) that he was valued at! Zech. xi. 12, 13. I confeſs, it is a wonder, he aſked no more; knowing how much they longed for his blood; and that they offered no more for him: how then ſhould the ſcriptures have been fulfilled? O what a ſale was this! to ſell that blood, which all the gold and ſilver in the world is not worth one drop of, for a trifle! ſtill the wickedneſs of the fact riſes higher and higher.

5. He left Chriſt in moſt heavenly and excellent employment, when he went to make this ſoul-undoing bargain. For if he went away from the table, as ſome think, then he left Chriſt inſtituting and adminiſtering thoſe heavenly ſigns of his body and blood: there he ſaw, or might have ſeen, the bloody work he was going about, acted as in a figure before him. If he ſat out that ordinance, as others ſuppoſe he did, then he left Chriſt ſinging an

* *Suavis odor lucri ex re qualibet.*
† Godw. Antiq. lib. 6. p. 205

Digitized by Google

heavenly hymn, and preparing to go where Judas was preparing to meet him. When the Lord Jesus was in the most serious and heavenly exercise, the wretch slinked away from him into the city, or else went under pretence to buy some necessaries*. But his design was not to buy, but to sell, whatever his pretences were. Nay,

6. What he did, was not done by the persuasions of any. The high-priest sent not for him, and, without doubt, was surprised when he came to him on such an errand. For it could never enter into any of their hearts, that any of his own disciples could ever be drawn into a confederacy against him. No, he went as a volunteer, offering himself to this work: which still heightens the sin, and makes it out of measure sinful.

7 The manner in which he executes his treasonable design adds further malignity to the fact He comes to Christ with fawning words and carriage, "Hail, Master, and kissed him." Here is honey in the tongue, and poison in the heart. Here is hatred hid under lying lips. This was the man, and this was his fact. Let us enquire,

Thirdly, The cause and motives of this wickedness, how he came to attempt and perpetrate such a villainy. Maldonate the Jesuit criminates the Protestant divines, for affirming that God had a hand in ordering and over-ruling this fact†.

But we say, that Satan and his own lust was the impulsive cause of it: that God, as it was a wicked treason, permitted it; and as it was a delivering Christ to death, was not only the permitter, but the wise and holy director and orderer of it, and by the wisdom of his providence over-ruled it, to the great good and advantage of the church; in respect of which happy issue, Judas's treason is called *felix scelus*, "a happy wickedness." Satan inspired the motion, Luke xxiii. 3, 4. "Then entered Satan into Judas, surnamed "Iscariot, and he went his way," &c. his own lusts, like dry tinder, kindled presently: his heart was covetous; there was predisposed matter enough for the devil to work on, so that it was but touch and take. Ver. 25. They covenanted to give him money, and he promised, &c.

The holy God disposed and ordered all this to the singular benefit and good of his people: Acts iv. 28. they did whatsoever "his

* Without doubt he went from Bethany, where the Lord then was, and either withdrew privately, or under pretence of buying necessaries. *Parens.*

† In so far as it was προδοσις, *i. e.* a betraying, it was the deed of Judas, tempted by Satan; in so far as it was παραδοσις, *i. e.* a delivering up, it was the effect of God's secret purpose, relating to the redemption of the church. Surely God was not a careless permitter of that whole work, but a most wise orderer and director of it. *Parens.*

Digitized by Google

"hand and counsel had before determined to be done." And by this determinate counsel of God, he was taken and slain, Acts ii. 23. Yet this no ways excuses the wickedness of the instruments: for what they did, was done from the power of their own lusts, most wickedly; what he did, was done in the unsearchable depth of his own wisdom, most holy. God knows how to serve his own ends by the very sins of men, and yet have no communion at all in the sin he so over-rules. If a man let a dog out of his hand in pursuit of a hare, the dog hunts merely for a prey; but he that lets him go, uses the sagacity and nimbleness of the dog to serve his own ends by it. Judas minded nothing but his own advantage to get money: God permitted that lust to work, but over-ruled the issue to his own eternal glory, and the salvation of our souls.

Fourthly and lastly, But what was the end and issue of this fact? As to Christ, it was his death; for the hour being come, he doth not meditate an escape, nor put forth the power of his Godhead to deliver himself out of their hands. Indeed he shewed what he could do, when he made them go back and stagger with a word. He could have obtained more than *twelve legions of angels* to have been his life-guard; one of whom had been sufficient to have coped with all the Roman legions: but how then should the scriptures have been fulfilled, or our salvation accomplished? No, he resists not, but Judas, delivering him into their hands at that time, was his death.

And what got he as a reward of his wickedness? It ended in the ruin both of his soul and body. For immediately a death-pang of despair seized his conscience; which was so intolerable, that he ran to the halter for a remedy; and so falling headlong he burst asunder, and all his bowels gushed out, Acts i. 18. And now he that had no bowels for Christ, hath none for himself. As for his soul, it went to its *own place*, ver. 25. even the place appointed for the son of perdition, as Christ calls him, John xvii. 12. His name retains an odious stench to this day, and shall to all generations: it is a bye-word, a proverb of reproach. This was his end; we will next improve it.

Corollary 1. Hence in the first place we learn, *That the greatest professors had need to be jealous of their own hearts, and look well to the grounds and principles of their professions.* One of the ancients would have had this epitaph engraven upon Judas's tomb-stone, εις εμε τις οραων νυσεβης εςω, i. e. "Let every one that beholds me, "learn to be godly indeed, to be sincere in his profession, and "to love Christ more unfeignedly than I did." O professors, look to your foundation, and build not upon the sand, as this poor creature did. That is sound advice, indeed, which the apostle

Digitized by Google

gives, 1 Cor. x. 12. "Let him that thinks he ſtandeth, take heed "leſt he fall." O beware of a looſe foundation*. If you begin your profeſſion as Judas did, no wonder if it ſhall end as his did.

1. Beware therefore that you hold not the truth in unrighteouſneſs: Judas did ſo: he knew much, but lived not up to what he knew, for he was ſtill of a worldly ſpirit in the height of his profeſſion. His knowledge never had any ſaving influence upon his heart. He preached to others, but he himſelf was a caſt-away. He had much light, but ſtill walked in darkneſs. He had no knowledge to do himſelf good.

2. Beware you live not in a courſe of ſecret ſin. Judas did ſo, and that was his ruin. He made a profeſſion indeed, and carried it ſmoothly, but he was a thief, John xii. 6. He made no conſcience of committing the ſin, ſo he could but cover and hide it from men. This helped on his ruin, and ſo it will thine, reader, if thou be guilty herein. A ſecret way of ſinning, under a covert of profeſſion, will either break out at laſt to the obſervation of men, or elſe ſlide thee down inſenſibly to hell, and leave thee there only this comfort, that no body ſhall know thou art there.

3. Beware of hypocritical pretences of religion to accommodate ſelf-ends. Judas was a man that had notable ſkill this way. He had a mind to fill his own purſe, by the ſale of that coſtly ointment which Mary beſtowed upon our Saviour's feet. And what a neat cover had he fitted for it, to do his buſineſs clearly; Why ſaith he, "This might have been ſold for three hundred pence, "and given to the poor." Here was charity to the poor, or rather poor charity; for this was only a blind to his baſe ſelf-ends. O Chriſtian, be plain-hearted, take heed of craft and cunning in matters of religion: This ſpoiled Judas.

4. Beware of ſelf-confidence. Judas was a very confident man of himſelf. "Laſt of all, Judas ſaid, Maſter, is it I?" Mat. xxvi. 25. But he that was *laſt* in the *ſuſpicion* was *firſt* in the *tranſgreſſion*. "He that truſteth in his own heart, is a fool," ſaith Solomon, Prov. xxviii. 26. Such a fool was this great profeſſor. It will be your wiſdom to keep a jealous eye upon your own hearts, and ſtill ſuſpect their faireſt pretences.

5. If you will not do as Judas did, nor come to ſuch an end as he did, take heed you live not unprofitably under the means of grace. Judas had the beſt means of grace that ever man enjoyed. He heard Chriſt himſelf preach, he joined often with him in prayer, but he was never the better for it all; it was but as the watering of a dead ſtick, which will never make it grow, but rot it the ſooner. Never was there a rotten branch ſo richly watered as he

* *Debile fundamentum fallit opus.*

Digitized by Google

was. O it is a sad sign and a sad sin too, when men and women live under the gospel from year to year, and are never the better. I warn you to beware of these evils, all ye that profess religion. Let these footsteps by which Judas went down to his own place, terrify you from following him in them.

Corollary 2. Learn hence also, *That eminent knowledge and profession put a special and eminent aggravation upon sin*. Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve.* Poor wretch! better had it been for him, if he had never been numbered with them, nor enlightened with so much knowledge as he was endowed with: for this rent his conscience to pieces, when he reflected on what he had done, and presently run into the gulph of despair. To sin against clear light, is to sin with an high hand. It is that which makes a sad waste of the conscience. That, without doubt, which now torments this poor soul in hell, is, that he should go against his light, against his profession, to gratify a base lust to his eternal ruin. Had he known no better, it had been more excusable. Those that had a hand in the death of Christ, through mistake and ignorance, were capable to receive the pardon of their sin by that blood they so shed, Acts iii. 17, 19. compared. Take heed therefore of abusing knowledge, and putting a force upon conscience.

Corollary 3. Learn hence in the third place, *That unprincipled professors will sooner or later become shameful apostates.* Judas was an unprincipled professor, and see what he came to; ambition invited Simon Magus to the profession of Christ, he would be τις μεγας, "some great one," and how quickly did the rottenness of his principles discover itself in the ruin of his profession? That which wants a root, must needs wither, as Christ speaks, Matth. xiii. 20, 21. That which is the predominant interest, will prevail, and sway with us in the day of our trial. Hear me, all you that profess religion, and have given your names to Christ; if that profession be not built upon a solid and real work of grace upon your hearts, you shall never honour religion, nor save your souls by it. O it is your union with Christ, that, like a spring, maintains your profession. "So much as you are united to Christ, so much "constancy, steadiness, and evenness, you will manifest in the "duties of religion, and no more†."

O brethren, when he that professes Christ for company, shall be left alone as Paul was; when he that makes religion a stirrup to help himself into the saddle of preferment and honour, shall see that he is so advanced to be drawn forth into Christ's camp, and endure the heat of the day, and not to take his pleasure; in a word, when

* The least violation of conscience is a very great sin. *Ames.*

† *Muniamur quatenus unimur.*

Digitized by Google

he ſhall ſee all things about him diſcouraging and threatening, his deareſt intereſt on earth expoſed for religion's ſake, and he hath no faith to balance his preſent loſſes with his future hopes; I ſay, when it comes to this, you ſhall then ſee the rottenneſs of many hearts diſcovered; and Judas may have many fellows, who will part with Chriſt for the world, as he did. O therefore look well to your foundation.

Corollary 4. Moreover, in this example of Judas you may read this truth; *That men and women are never in more imminent danger, than when they meet with temptations exactly ſuited to their maſter-luſts, to their own iniquity.* O pray, pray, that ye may be kept from a violent ſuitable temptation. Satan knows that when a man is tried here, he falls by the root. The love of this world was all along Judas's maſter-ſin, and ſome conjecture he was a married man, and had a great charge; but that is conjectural: this was his predominant luſt. The devil found out this, and ſuited it with a temptation which fully hit his humour, and it carries him immediately. This is the dangerous *criſis* of the ſoul. Now you ſhall ſee what it is, and what it will do. Put money before Judas, and preſently you ſhall ſee what the man is.

Corollary 5. Hence, in like manner, we are inſtructed, *That no man knows where he ſhall ſtop, when he firſt engages himſelf in a way of ſin**.

Wickedneſs, as well as holineſs, is not born in its full ſtrength, but grows up to it by inſenſible degrees. So did the wickedneſs of Judas. I believe, he himſelf never thought he ſhould have done what he did: and if any ſhould have told him, in the firſt beginning of his profeſſion, Thou ſhalt ſell the blood of Chriſt for money, thou ſhalt deliver him moſt perfidiouſly into their hands that ſeek his life; he would have anſwered as Hazael did to Eliſha, "But what, is thy ſervant a dog, that he ſhould do this great "thing?" 2 Kings viii. 13. His wickedneſs firſt diſcovered itſelf in murmuring and diſcontent, taking a pique at ſome ſmall matters againſt Chriſt, as you may find, by comparing John vi. from verſe 60 to 70. with John xii. from verſe 3 to 9. but ſee to what it grows at laſt. That luſt or temptation that at firſt is but a little cloud as big as a man's hand, may quickly overſpread the whole heaven. It is our engaging in ſin, as in the motion of a ſtone down the hill, *vires acquirit eundo*, "it ſtrengthens itſelf by going;" and the longer it runs, the more violent. Beware of the ſmalleſt beginnings of temptations. No wiſe man will neglect or ſlight the ſmalleſt ſpark of fire, eſpecially if he ſee it among many barrels

* *Nemo repente fit turpiſſimus*, i. e. No perſon ſuddenly becomes moſt profligate.

Digitized by Google

of gun-powder. You carry gun-powder about you, O take heed of ſparks.

Corollary 6. Did Judas ſell Chriſt for money? *What a potent conqueror is the love of this world!* How many hath it caſt down wounded? What great profeſſors have been dragged at its chariot wheels as its captives? Hymenæus and Philetus, Ananias and Sapphira, Demas and Judas, with thouſands and ten thouſands, ſince their days, led away in triumph. It "drowns men in perdi-"tion," 1 Tim. vi. 9. In that pit of perdition, this ſon of perdition fell, and never roſe more. O you that ſo court and proſecute it; that ſo love and admire it; make a ſtand here; pauſe a little upon this example; conſider to what it brought this poor wretch, whom I have preſented to you dead, eternally dead, by the mortal wound that the love of this world gave him: it deſtroyed both ſoul and body. Pliny tells us, that the Mermaids delight to be in green meadows, into which they draw men by their enchanting voices; but, ſaith he, there always lie heaps of dead men's bones by them. A lively emblem of a bewitching world! Good had it been for many profeſſors of religion, if they had never known what the riches, and honours, and pleaſures of this world meant.

Corollary 7. Did Judas fancy ſo much happineſs in a little money, that he would ſell Chriſt to get it? Learn then, *That which men promiſe themſelves much pleaſure and contentment in, in the way of ſin, may prove the greateſt curſe and miſery to them that ever befel them in the world.* Judas thought it was a brave thing to get money! he fancied much happineſs in it: but how ſick was his conſcience as ſoon as he had ſwallowed it! O take it again, ſaith he! It griped him to the heart. He knows not what to do, to rid himſelf of that money. Give me children, ſaith Rachel, or I die: ſhe hath children, and they prove her death. O mortify your fancies to the world; put no neceſſity upon riches. "They that will be "rich fall into temptations, and many hurtful luſts, which drown "men in perdition," 1 Tim. vi. 9. You may have your deſires with a curſe. He that brings home a pack of fine clothes infected with the plague, has no ſuch great bargain of it, how cheap ſoever he bought them.

Corollary 8. Was there one, and but one of the twelve, that proved a Judas, a traitor to Chriſt? Learn thence, *That it is a moſt unreaſonable thing to be prejudiced at religion, and the ſincere profeſſors of it, becauſe ſome that profeſs it prove naught and vile.*

Should the eleven ſuffer for one Judas? Alas, they abhorred both the traitor and his treaſon. As well might the High-prieſt and his ſervants have condemned Peter, John, and all the reſt, whoſe ſouls abhorred the wickedneſs. If Judas proved a vile wretch, yet there were eleven to one that remained upright: if

Digitized by Google

Judas proved naught, it was not his profeſſion made him ſo, but his hypocriſy; he never learned it from Chriſt. If religion muſt be charged with all the miſcarriages of its profeſſors, then there is no pure religion in the world. Name that religion among the profeſſors whereof there is not one Judas. Take heed, reader, of prejudices againſt godlineſs on this account. The deſign of the devil, without doubt, is to undo thee eternally by them. "Wo "to the world becauſe of offences," Matth. xviii. 7. And what if God do permit theſe things to fall out, that thou mayeſt be hardened in iniquity, confirmed in ſin by ſuch occaſions, and ſo thy deſtruction brought about this way: Bleſſed is he that is not offended at Chriſt.

Corollary 9. Did Judas, one of the twelve, do ſo? Learn thence, *That a drop of grace, is better than a ſea of gifts.* Gifts have ſome excellency in them, but the way of grace is the more excellent way, 1 Cor. xii. 31. Gifts, as one ſaith, are dead graces, but graces are living gifts. There is many a learned head in hell. Theſe are not the things that accompany ſalvation. Gifts are the gold that beautifies the temple; but grace is as the temple which ſanctifies the gold. One tear, one groan, one breathing of an upright heart, is more than the tongues of angels.

Poor Chriſtian, thou art troubled that thou canſt not ſpeak and pray ſo neatly, ſo handſomely, as ſome others can; but canſt thou go into a corner, and there pour out thy ſoul affectionately, though not rhetorically, to thy Father? trouble not thyſelf. It is better for thee to feel one divine impreſſion from God upon thy heart, than to have ten thouſand fine notions floating in thy head: Judas was a man of parts; but what good did they do him?

Corollary 10. Did the devil win the conſent of Judas to ſuch a deſign as this? Could he get no other but the hand of an apoſtle to aſſiſt him? Learn hence, *That the policy of Satan lies much in the choice of his inſtruments he works by.* No bird, (ſaith one) like a living bird to tempt others into the net. Pelagius, Socinus, *&c.* were fit for that work the devil put them upon. * Auſtin told an ingenious young ſcholar, "The devil coveted him for an orna- "ment." He knows he hath a foul cauſe to manage, and therefore will get the faireſt hand he can to manage it with the leſs ſuſpicion.

Corollary 11. Did Judas, one of the twelve, do this? Then certainly, *Chriſtians may approve and join with ſuch men on earth, whoſe faces they ſhall never ſee in heaven.* The apoſtles held communion a long time with this man, and did not ſuſpect him. O pleaſe not yourſelves therefore, that you have communion with the ſaints

* *Cupit abs te ornari Diabolus.*

Digitized by Google

here, and that they think and speak charitably of you. "All the "churches shall know, (saith the Lord) that I am he that search- "eth the heart and reins, and will give to every man as his work "shall be," Rev. ii. 23. In heaven we shall meet many that we never thought to meet there, and miss many we were confident we should see there.

Corollary 12. Lastly, Did Judas, one of the twelve, a man so obliged, raised and honoured by Christ, do this? *Cease then from man*, be not too confident, but beware of men. "Trust ye not in "a friend, put no confidence in a guide, keep the door of thy "lips from her that lieth in thy bosom," Mic. vii. 5. Not that there is no sincerity in any man, but because there is so much hypocrisy in many men, and so much corruption in the best of men, that we may not be too confident, nor lay too great a stress upon any man. Peter's modest expression of Sylvanus is a pattern for us; "Sylvanus, a faithful brother unto you (as I suppose") 1 Pet. v. 12. The time shall come, saith Christ, that "brother shall betray brother to death," Mat. x. 11. Your charity for others may be your duty, but your too great confidence may be your snare. Fear what others may do, but fear thyself more.

SERMON XXIV.

The second and third Preparatives for the Death of CHRIST, by his illegal Trial and Condemnation.

LUKE xxiii. 23, 24.

And they were instant with loud voices, requiring that he might be crucified; and the voices of them, and of the chief priests prevailed. And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required.

JUDAS has made good his promise to the high-priest, and delivered Jesus a prisoner into their hands. These wolves of the evening, no sooner seize the Lamb of God, but they thirst and long to be sucking his precious innocent blood; their revenge and malice admit no delay, as fearing a rescue by the people.

When Herod had taken Peter, he committed him to prison, "intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people*," Acts

* In so great a mixed multitude it was easy to raise a tumult, if the people had thought so great a prophet was murdered, contrary to all law and justice. *Par. in Matth.* xxvi. 5.

Digitized by Google

xii. 4. But these men cannot sleep till they have his blood, and therefore the preparation of the passover being come, they resolve in all haste to destroy him; yet lest it should look like a downright murder, it shall be formalized with a trial. This his *trial* and *condemnation* are the two last acts by which they prepared for his death, and are both contained in this context; in which we may observe, 1. The *indictment*. 2. The *sentence* to which the judge proceeded.

1. The *indictment* drawn up against Christ, wherein they accuse him of many things, but can prove nothing. They charge him with sedition and blasphemy, but falter shamefully in the proof. However, what is wanting in evidence, shall be supplied with clamour and importunity. For saith the text. "They were "instant with loud voices, requiring that he might be crucified; "and their voices prevailed:" When they can neither prove the sedition nor blasphemy they charged him with, then, Crucify him, Crucify him, must serve the turn, instead of all witnesses and proofs.

The *sentence* pronounced upon him; *Pilate gave sentence, that it should be as they required*: i. e. he sentenced Christ to be nailed to the cross, and there to hang till he was dead. From both these we may observe these two doctrinal conclusions.

Doct. 1. *That the trial of Christ for his life, was managed most maliciously and illegally against him, by his unrighteous judges.*

Doct. 2. *Though nothing could be proved against our Lord Jesus Christ worthy of death, or of bonds; yet he was condemned to be nailed to the cross, and there to hang till he died.*

I shall handle these two points distinctly in their order, beginning with the first, namely,

Doct. 1. *That the trial of Christ for his life, was managed most maliciously and illegally against him, by his unrighteous judges.*

Reader, here thou mayest see the Judge of all the world standing himself to be judged; he that shall judge the world in righteousness, judged most unrighteously; he that shall one day come to the throne of judgment, attended with thousands, and ten thousands of angels and saints, standing as a prisoner at man's bar, and there denied the common right which a thief or murderer might claim, and is commonly given them.

To manifest the illegality of Christ's trial, let the following particulars be heedfully weighed.

Digitized by Google

1. That he was inhumanly abuſed, both in words and actions, before the court met, or any examination was taken of the fact: for as ſoon as they had taken him, they forthwith bound him, and led him away to the High-prieſt's houſe, Luke xxii. 54. And there they that held him, mocked him, ſmote him, blind-folded him, ſtruck him on the face, and bid him propheſy who ſmote him; and many other things blaſphemouſly ſpake they againſt him, ver. 63, 64, 65. How illegal and barbarous a thing was this? When they were but binding Paul with thongs, he thought himſelf abuſed contrary to law, and aſked the centurion that ſtood by, "Is it law-"ful for you to ſcourge a man that is a Roman, and uncon-"demned?" q. d. Is this legal! What, puniſh a man firſt, and judge him afterwards! But Chriſt was not only bound, but horribly abuſed by them all that night, dealing with him as the lords of the Philiſtines did with Sampſon, to whom it was ſport to abuſe him. No reſt had Jeſus that night; no more ſleep for him now in this world: O it was a ſad night to him: and this under Caiaphas's own roof.

2. As he was inhumanly abuſed before he was tried, ſo he was examined and judged by a court that had no authority to try him. Luke xxii. 66. "As ſoon as it was day, the elders of the people, "and the chief prieſts, and the ſcribes came together, and led him into their counſel." This was the *eccleſiaſtical court*, the great *Sanhedrim*, which, according to its firſt conſtitution, ſhould conſiſt of ſeventy grave, honourable, and learned men; to whom were to be referred all doubtful matters, too hard for inferior courts to decide. And theſe were to judge impartially and uprightly for God, as men in whom was the Spirit of God, according to God's counſel to Moſes, Numb. xi. 16, &c. In this court the righteous and innocent might expect relief and protection. And that is conceived to be the meaning of Chriſt's words, Luke xiii. 33. "It "cannot be that a prophet periſh out of Jeruſalem;" that is, there righteouſneſs and innocency may expect protection. But now, contrary to the firſt conſtitution, it conſiſted of a pack of malicious Scribes and Phariſees, men full of revenge, malice, and all unrighteouſneſs: and over theſe Caiaphas (a head fit for ſuch a body) at this time preſided. And though there was ſtill ſome face of a court among them, yet their power was ſo abridged by the Romans, that they could not hear and determine, judge and condemn in capital matters, as formerly. For as * Joſephus their own hiſtorian informs us, Herod in the beginning of his reign took away this power from them; and that ſcripture ſeems to confirm

* Antiq. lib. 14. cap. 205.

Digitized by Google

it, John xviii. 31. "It is not lawful for us to put any man to "death;" and therefore they bring him to Pilate's bar. He alſo underſtood him to be a Galilean; and Herod being Tetrarch of Galilee, and at that time in Jeruſalem, he is ſent to him, and by him remitted to Pilate.

3. As he was at firſt heard and judged by a court that had no authority to judge him; ſo when he ſtood at Pilate's bar, he was accuſed of perverting the nation, and denying tribute to Cæſar, than which nothing was more notoriouſly falſe. For as all his doctrine was pure and heavenly, and malice itſelf could not find a flaw in it; ſo he was always obſervant of the laws under which he lived, and ſcrupulous of giving the leaſt juſt offence to the civil powers. Yea, he not only paid the tribute himſelf though he might have pleaded exemption, but charged it upon others as their duty ſo to do, Mat. xxii. 24. "Give unto Cæſar the things "that are Cæſar's. And yet with ſuch palpable untruths is Chriſt "charged.

4. Yea, and what is more abominable and unparalleled; to compaſs their malicious deſigns, they induſtriouſly labour to ſuborn falſe witneſſes to take away his life, not ſticking at the groſſeſt perjury, and manifeſt injuſtice, ſo they might deſtroy him. So you read, Mat. xxvi. 59. "Now the chief prieſts and elders, "and all the council, ſought falſe witneſſes againſt Jeſus to put "him to death." Abominable wickedneſs! for ſuch men, and ſo many, to complot to ſhed the blood of the innocent, by known and ſtudied perjury! What will not malice againſt Chriſt tranſport men to?

5. Moreover, the carriage of the court was moſt inſolent and baſe towards him during the trial: for whilſt he ſtood before them as a priſoner, yet uncondemned, ſometimes they are angry at him for his ſilence; and when he ſpeaks, and that pertinently to the point, they ſmite him on the mouth for ſpeaking, and ſcoff at what he ſpeaks*. "To ſome of their light, frivolous and en-"ſnaring queſtions, he is ſilent, not for want of an anſwer, but "becauſe he heard nothing worthy of one." And to fulfil what the prophet Iſaiah had long before predicted of him: "He was op-"preſſed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he "is brought as a lamb to the ſlaughter, and as a ſheep before her "ſhearers is dumb, ſo he opened not his mouth," Iſa. liii. 7. As alſo to leave us a precedent when to ſpeak, and when to be ſilent, when we for his name ſake ſhall be brought before governors: for ſuch reaſons as theſe he ſometimes anſwers not a word,

* *Quia indignam reſponſo judicat manifeſtam falſitatem; non defenſione deſtitutus, ſed ut impleretur prophetæ oraculum.* Par.

Digitized by Google

and then they are ready to condemn him for a mute. "Anſwereſt "thou nothing? (ſaith the high-prieſt) what is it that theſe wit- "neſs againſt thee?" Mat. xxvi. 62. "Heareſt thou not how "many things they witneſs againſt thee?" ſaith Pilate, Mat. xxvii. 13.

And when he makes his defence in words of truth and ſoberneſs, they ſmite him for ſpeaking, John xviii. 22. "And when he "had thus ſpoken, one of the officers which ſtood by, ſtruck "Jeſus with the palm of his hand, ſaying, anſwereſt thou the "high-prieſt ſo?" And what had he ſpoken to exaſperate them? Had he ſpoken impertinently? Not at all; what he ſaid was but this, when they would have had him enſnare himſelf with his own lips: "Jeſus anſwered, I ſpake openly in the world, I ever taught "in the ſynagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always "reſort, and in ſecret have I ſaid nothing. Why aſkeſt thou me? "Aſk them that heard me, behold they know what I ſaid:" q. d. I am not obliged to accuſe and enſnare myſelf, but you ought to proceed *ſecundum allegata et probata*, according to what is alledged and proved. Did he deſerve a blow on his mouth for this? O who but himſelf could have ſo patiently digeſted ſuch abuſes! Under all this he ſtands in perfect innocency and patience, making no other return to that wretch that ſmote him, but this, "If I "have ſpoken evil, bear witneſs of the evil: but if well, why "ſmiteſt thou me?"

6. Laſtly, To inſtance in no more: he is condemned to die by that very mouth which had once and again profeſſed he found no fault in him. He had heard all that could be alledged againſt him, and ſaw it was a perfect piece of malice and envy. When they urge Pilate to proceed to ſentence him; why, ſaith he, what evil hath he done?" Mat. xxvii. 23. Nay, in the preface to the very ſentence itſelf, he acknowledges him to be a juſt perſon, Mat. xxvii. 24. "When Pilate ſaw he could prevail nothing, but that "rather a tumult was made, he took water, and waſhed his "hands before the multitude, and ſaid, I am innocent of the "blood of this juſt perſon, ſee ye to it." Here the innocency of Chriſt brake out like the ſun wading out of a cloud, convincing the conſcience of his judge that he was juſt; and yet he muſt give ſentence on him, for all that, to pleaſe the people.

Inference 1. Was Chriſt thus uſed when he ſtood before the great council, the ſcribes and elders of Iſrael? Then ſurely "great men are not always wiſe, neither do the aged underſtand "judgment," Job xxxii. 9. Here were many great men, many aged men, many politic men in council; but not one wiſe or good man among them. In this council were men of parts and learning, men of great abilities, and by ſo much the more pernicious,

Digitized by Google

and able to do miſchief. Wickedneſs in a great or learned man, is like poiſon given in wine, the more operative and deadly. Chriſt's greateſt enemies were ſuch as theſe. Heathen Pilate had more pity for him than *ſuperſtitious* Caiaphas. Luther tells us, that his greateſt adverſaries did not riſe out of the ale-houſes or brothel-houſes, but out of *monaſteries, convents*, and *religious houſes*.

Inf. 2. Hence alſo we learn, *That though we are not obliged to anſwer every captious, idle, or enſnaring queſtion, yet we are bound faithfully to own and confeſs the truth, when we are ſolemnly called thereto.*

It is true, Chriſt was ſometimes ſilent, and as a deaf man that heard not; but when the queſtion was ſolemnly put, "Art thou "the Chriſt, the Son of the bleſſed? Jeſus ſaid, I am," Mat. xiv. 61, 62. He knew that anſwer would coſt his life, and yet he durſt not deny it. On this account the apoſtle ſaith, "he wit-"neſſed a good confeſſion before Pontius Pilate," 1 Tim. vi. 13. Herein Chriſt hath ruled out the way of our duty, and by his own example, as well as precept, obliged us to a ſincere confeſſion of him, and his truth, when we are required lawfully ſo to do, i. e. when we are before a lawful magiſtrate, and the queſtions are not curious or captious; when we cannot hold our peace, but our ſilence will be interpretatively a denying of the truth; finally, when the glory of God, honour of his truth, and edification of others, are more attainable by our open confeſſion, than they can be by our ſilence; then muſt we with Chriſt, give direct, plain, ſincere anſwers.

It was the old Priſcillian error, to allow men to deny or diſſemble their profeſſion, when an open confeſſion would infer danger. But you know what Chriſt hath ſaid, Mat. x. 33. "Who-"ſoever ſhall deny me before men, him will I deny before my "Father which is in heaven." Chriſt will repay him in his own coin. It was a noble ſaying of courageous * Zuinglius, "What "deaths would I not chuſe? What puniſhment would I not un-"dergo? Yea, into what vault of hell would I not rather chuſe to "be thrown, than to witneſs againſt my conſcience?" Truth can never be bought too dear, nor ſold cheap. The Lord Jeſus, you ſee, owns truth with the imminent and inſtant hazard of his life. The whole Cloud of witneſſes have followed him therein, Rev. xiv. 1. We ourſelves once openly owned the ways of ſin; and ſhall we not do as much for Chriſt, as we then did for the devil? Did we then glory in our ſhame, and ſhall we now be aſhamed of our glory? Do not we hope Chriſt will own us at the great day?

* *Quas non oportet mortes præligere? Quod non ſupplicium potius ferre? Imo in quam profundam inferni abyſſum non intrare, quam contra conſcientiam atteſtare?* Zuing.

Digitized by Google

Why, if we confeſs him, he alſo will confeſs us. O think on the reaſonableneſs of this duty.

Inf. 3. Once more, hence it follows, *That to bear the revilings, contradictions, and abuſes of men, with a meek, compoſed, and even ſpirit, is excellent and Chriſt-like.* He ſtood before them as a lamb; he rendered not railing for railing; he endured the contradictions of ſinners againſt himſelf. Imitate Chriſt in his meekneſs. He calls you ſo to do, Mat. xi. 28. This will be convincing to your enemies, comfortable to yourſelves, and honourable to religion: and as for your innocency, God will clear it up as Chriſt's was.

You have heard the illegal trial of Chriſt, how inſolently it was managed againſt him; well, right or wrong, innocent or guilty, his blood is reſolved upon; it is bought and ſold before-hand; and if nothing elſe will do it, menaces and clamours ſhall conſtrain Pilate to condemn him. Whence our ſecond note was,

Doct. 2. *That though nothing could be proved againſt our Lord Jeſus Chriſt worthy of death or of bonds; yet was he condemned to be nailed to the croſs, and there to hang till he died.*

For the explication of this, I ſhall open the following particulars. *Firſt*, Who gave the ſentence. *Secondly*, Upon whom it was given. *Thirdly*, What ſentence it was that was given. *Fourthly*, In what manner Chriſt received it.

Firſt, Who, and what was he, that durſt attempt ſuch a thing as this? Why, this was Pilate, who ſucceeded Valerius Gratus in the preſidentſhip of Judea, (as * Joſephus tells us) in which truſt he continued about ten years. This cruel, curſed act of his againſt Chriſt was in the eighth year of his government. Two years after, he was removed from his place and office by Vitellius, preſident of Syria, for his inhuman murdering of the innocent Samaritans. This neceſſitated him to go to Rome to clear himſelf before Cæſar; but before he came to Rome, Tiberius was dead, and Caius in his room. Under him, ſaith †Euſebius, Pilate killed himſelf. ‡ "He was a man not very friendly or benevolent to the "Jewiſh nation, but ſtill ſuſpicious of their rebellions and inſur-"rections; this jealous humour the prieſts and ſcribes obſerved, "and wrought upon it to compaſs their deſign againſt Chriſt." Therefore they tell him ſo often of Chriſt's ſedition, and ſtirring up the people; and that if he let him go, he is none of Cæſar's

* Joſephus, lib. 18. Ant. Judaæ, quarto ad cap. 7.

† Euſeb. Hiſt. Eccleſ. lib. 2. cap. 7.

‡ *Non dubitabam emulos Judæorum genti, propterea quod eam ſuſpectam haberet animo erga Cæſarem; hunc putant ſacerdotes commodum fore ipſorum propoſito,* &c. Bucer. in Mat. xxvii.

Digitized by Google

friends; which very conſideration prevailed with him to do what he did. But how durſt he attempt ſuch a wickedneſs as this, though he had ſtood ill in the opinion of Cæſar? What! give judgment againſt the Son of God? for it is evident, by many circumſtances in this trial, that he had many inward fears and convictions upon him, that he was the Son of God‡: By theſe he was ſcared, and ſought to releaſe him, John xix. 8, 12. the fear of a Deity fell upon him; his mind was greatly perplexed, and dubious about this priſoner, whether he was a God or a man. And yet the fear of Cæſar prevailed more than the fear of a Deity; he proceeds to give ſentence.

O Pilate! thou waſt not afraid to judge and ſentence an innocent, a known innocent, and one whom thou thyſelf ſuſpecteſt at leaſt to be more than man! But ſee in this predominancy of ſelf-intereſt, what man will attempt, and perpetrate, to ſecure and accommodate ſelf.

Secondly, Againſt whom doth Pilate give ſentence? againſt a malefactor? No, his own mouth once and again acknowledged him innocent. Againſt a common priſoner? No, but one whoſe fame no doubt had often reached Pilate's ears, even the wonderful things wrought by him, which none but God could do: one that ſtood before him as the picture, or rather as the body, of innocency and meekneſs. Ye have condemned and killed the juſt, and he reſiſteth you not, Jam. v. 6. Now was that word made good, Pſal. xciv. 21. "They gather themſelves together againſt "the ſoul of the righteous, and condemn the innocent blood."

Thirdly, But what was the ſentence that Pilate gave? We have it not in the form in which it was delivered: but the ſum of it was, that it ſhould be as they required. Now what did they require? why, crucify him, crucify him. So that in what formalities ſoever it was delivered, this was the ſubſtance and effect of it, *I adjudge Jeſus of Nazareth to be nailed to the croſs, and there to hang till he be dead.* Which ſentence againſt Chriſt was,

1. *A moſt unjuſt and unrighteous ſentence:* the greateſt perverſion of judgment and equity that was ever known to the civilized world, ſince ſeats of judicature were firſt ſet up. What! to condemn him before one accuſation was proved againſt him? And if what they accuſed him of (that he ſaid he was the Son of God) had been proved, it had been no crime, for he really was ſo; and therefore no blaſphemy in him to ſay he was. Pilate ſhould rather have come down from his ſeat of judgment, and adored him, than ſat

‡ Having heard the name of the Son of God, his mind was ſmitten with a religious awe; and being ſtruck with the fear of a Deity, he was perplexed and in ſuſpenſe, thinking himſelf in preſent danger, as at the brink of a pit. *Marlor.* in

Digitized by Google

there to judge him. O it was the higheſt piece of injuſtice that ever our ears heard of!

2. As it was an unrighteous, ſo it was a *cruel ſentence*, delivering up Chriſt to their wills. This was that miſery which David ſo earneſtly deprecated, Pſal. xxvii. 12. "O deliver me not over to "the will of mine enemies." But Pilate delivers Chriſt over to the will of his enemies, men full of enmity, rage, and malice, whoſe greateſt pleaſure it was to glut themſelves with his blood, and to ſatiate their revengeful hearts with ſuch a ſpectacle of miſery. For lo, as ſoon as theſe wolves had gripped their prey, they were not ſatisfied with that curſed, cruel, and ignominious death of the croſs, to which Pilate had adjudged him, but they are reſolved he ſhall die over and over; they will contrive many deaths in one: now they ſay as a tyrant did once, *moriatur, ut ſentiat ſe mori*; "let him die, ſo as he may feel himſelf to die." To this end they preſently ſtrip him naked; ſcourge him cruelly; array him in ſcarlet, and mock him; crown him with a buſh of plaited thorns; faſten that crown upon his head by a blow with a cane, which ſet them deep into his ſacred temples; ſceptered him with a reed, ſpat in his face, ſtript off his mock-robes again; put the croſs upon his back, and compelled him to bear it. All this, and much more, they expreſs their cruelty by, as ſoon as they had him delivered over to their will. So that this was a cruel ſentence.

3. As it was a cruel, ſo it was a *raſh* and haſty ſentence. The Jews are all in haſte; conſulting all night, and early up by the break of day in the morning, to get him to his trial. They ſpur on Pilate, with all arguments they can, to give ſentence. His trial took up but one morning, and a great part of that was ſpent in ſending him from Caiaphas to Pilate, and from Pilate to Herod, and then back again to Pilate; ſo that it was a haſty and headlong ſentence that Pilate gave. He did not ſift and examine the matter, but handles it very ſlightly. The trial of many a mean man hath taken up ten times more debates and time than was ſpent about Chriſt. "* They that look but ſlightly into the cauſe, eaſily pro-"nounce and give ſentence." But that which was then done in haſte, they have had time enough to repent for ſince.

4. As it was a raſh and haſty, ſo it was an *extorted, forced ſentence*†. They ſqueeze it out of Pilate by mere clamour, importunity, and ſuggeſtions of danger. In courts of judicature, ſuch arguments ſhould ſignify but little; not importunity, but proof, ſhould carry it: but timorous Pilate bends like a willow at this

* *Qui ad pauca reſpiciant, facile pronunciant,*

† By menaces they extort from him the condemnation of Chriſt. *Calvin.*

Digitized by Google

breath of the people: he had neither such a sense of justice, nor spirit of courage, as to withstand it.

5. As it was an extorted, so it was an *hypocritical* sentence, masking horrid murder under a pretence and formality of law. It must look like a legal procedure to palliate the business. Loth he was to condemn him, lest innocent blood should clamour in his conscience; but since he must do it, he will transfer the guilt upon them, and they take it; "his blood be on us, and on our children "for ever," say they. Pilate calls for water, washes his hands before them, and tells them, "I am free from the blood of this "just person." But stay; free from his blood, and yet condemn a known innocent person? Free from his blood, because he washed his hands in water? No, no, he could never be free, except his soul had been washed in that blood he shed. O the hypocrisy of Pilate! Such juggling as this will not serve his turn, when he shall stand as a prisoner before him, who now stood arraigned at his bar.

6. And lastly, As it was an hypocritical, so it was an *unrevoked* sentence: it admitted not of a reprieve, no, not for a day; nor doth Christ appeal to any other judicature, or once desire the least delay; but away he is hurried in haste to the execution. Blush, O ye heavens! and tremble, O earth! at such a sentence as this! Now is Christ dead in law; now he knows whither he must be carried, and that presently. His soul and body must feel that, the very sight of which put him into an agony but the night before.

Fourthly, and lastly, In what manner did Christ receive this cruel and unrighteous sentence? He received it like himself, with admirable meekness and patience. He doth as it were wrap himself up in his own innocency, and obedience to his Father's will, and stands at the bar with invincible patience, and meek submission. He doth not at once desire the judge to defer the sentence, much less fall down and beg for his life, as other prisoners use to do at such times. No, but as a sheep he goes to the slaughter, not opening his mouth. Some apply that expression to Christ, Jam. v. 6. "Ye have condemned and killed the Just, and he resisteth "you not." From the time that Pilate gave sentence, till he was nailed to the cross, we do not read that ever he said any thing, save only to the women that followed him out of the city to Golgotha: and what he said there, rather manifested his pity to them, than any discontent at what was now come upon him; "Daugh- "ters of Jerusalem, (saith he) weep not for me, but weep for "yourselves, and for your children," Luke xxiii. 28, *&c.* O the perfect patience and meekness of Christ. The inferences from hence are;

Inference 1. Do you see what was here done against Christ, under

Digitized by Google

pretence of law? *What cauſe have we to pray for good laws, and righteous executioners of them?*

O! It is a ſingular mercy to live under good laws, which protect the innocent from injury. Laws are hedges about our lives, liberties, eſtates, and all the comforts we enjoy in this world. Times will be evil enough, when iniquity is not *diſcountenanced* and puniſhed by law; but how evil are thoſe times like to prove when iniquity is *eſtabliſhed by law!* As the Pſalmiſt complains, Pſal. xciv. 20. "It was the complaint of Pliny to Trajan, that whereas "crimes were wont to be the burden of the age, now laws were ſo; "and that he feared the commonwealth which was eſtabliſhed, "would be ſubverted by laws*." It is not likely that virtue will much flouriſh, when "judgment ſprings up as hemlock in the furrows of the field," Hoſ. x. 4. How much therefore is it our concernment to pray, that "judgment may run down as a mighty "ſtream?" Amos v. 24. "That our officers may be peace, and "our exactors righteouſneſs?" Iſa. lx. 17. It was not therefore without great reaſon, that the apoſtle exhorted, that "ſupplica-"tions, prayers, interceſſions, and giving of thanks be made for "all men; for kings, and all that are in authority, that we may "lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godlineſs and honeſty," 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2. Great is the intereſt of the church of God in them; they are inſtruments of much good or much evil.

Inf. 2. Was Chriſt condemned in a court of judicature? *How evident then is it, that there is a judgment to come after this life?* Surely things will not be always carried as they are in this world. When you ſee Jeſus condemned, and Barabbas releaſed, conclude, that a time will come when innocency ſhall be vindicated, and wickedneſs ſhamed. On this very ground, Solomon concludes, and very rationally, that God will call over things hereafter at a more righteous tribunal: "And moreover, I ſaw under the ſun the place of "judgment, that wickedneſs was there; and the place of righte-"ouſneſs, that iniquity was there. I ſaid in my heart, God ſhall "judge the righteous, and the wicked: for there is a time there "for every purpoſe and for every work," Eccleſ. iii. 16, 17. Some indeed, on this ground, have denied the divine providence; but Solomon draws a quite contrary concluſion, *God ſhall judge:* Surely, he will take the matter into his own hand, he will bring forth the righteouſneſs of his people as the light, and their juſt dealing as the noon-day. It is a mercy, if we be wronged in one court, that we can appeal to another, where we ſhall be ſure to be relieved by a juſt impartial Judge. "Be patient therefore, my

* *Olim criminibus, jam legibus laboratur; et metuendum eſt, ne reſpublica fundata, ſit legibus everſa.* Plin. ad Trajan.

Digitized by Google

"brethren (saith the apostle) until the coming of the Lord," James v, 6, 7, 8.

Inf. 3. Again, *here you see how conscience may be over-born and run down by a fleshly interest.* Pilate's conscience bid him beware, and forbear; his interest bid him act: his fear of Cæsar was more than the fear of God. But O! what a dreadful thing is it for conscience to be ensnared by the fears of man? Prov. xxix. 25. To guard thy soul, reader, against this mischief, let such considerations as these be ever with thee.

1. Consider how dear those profits, or pleasures cost, which are purchased with the loss of inward peace! There is nothing in this world good enough to recompense such a loss, or ballance the misery of a tormenting conscience. If you violate it, and prostitute it for a fleshly lust, it will *remember* the injury you did it many years after; Gen. xlii. 21. Job xiii. 26. It will not only retain the memory of what you did, but it will *accuse* you for it; Mat. xxvii. 4. It will not fear to tell you that plainly, which others dare not whisper. It will not only accuse, but it will also *condemn* you for what you have done. This condemning voice of conscience is a very terrible voice.

You may see the horror of it in Cain, the vigour of it in Judas, the doleful *effects* of it in Spira. It will, from all these its offices, produce *shame*, *fear*, and *despair*, if God give not repentance to life. The *shame* it works will so confound you, that you will not be able to look up; Job xxxi. 14. Psal. i. 5. The *fear* it works will make you wish for a hole in the rock to hide you; Isa. ii. 9, 10, 15, 19. And its *despair* is a death-pang. The cutting off of hope, is the greatest cut in the world. O! who can stand under such a load as this? Prov. xvii. 14.

2. Consider the nature of your present actions; they are seed sown for eternity, and will spring up again in suitable effects, rewards, and punishments, when you that did them are turned to dust. Gal. vi. 7. "What a man sows, that shall he reap:" And as sure as the harvest follows the seed time, so sure shall shame, fear, and horror, follow sin, Dan. xii. 2. What Zeuxis, the famous limner, said of his work, may much more truly be said of ours, *æternitati pingo*, I paint for eternity, said he, when one asked him why he was so curious in his work. Ah! how bitter will those things be in the account and reckoning, which were pleasant in the acting and committing? It is true, our actions, physically considered, are transient; how soon is a word or action spoken or done, and there is an end of it? But *morally* considered, they are permanent, being put upon God's book of account. O! therefore take heed what you do: so speak, and so act, as they that must give an account.

Digitized by Google

3. Consider, how by these things men do but prepare for their own torment in a dying hour. There is bitterness enough in death, you need not add more gall and wormwood to increase the bitterness of it. What is the violencing and wounding of conscience now, but the sticking so many pins or needles in your death-bed, against you come to lie down on it? This makes death bitter indeed. How many have wished in a dying hour, they had rather lived poor and low all their days, than to have strained their consciences for the world? Ah! how is the face and aspect of things altered in such an hour.

No such considerations as these had any place in Pilate's heart; for if so, he would never have been courted, or feared in such an act as this.

Inf. 4. Did Christ stand arraigned and condemned at Pilate's bar? *Then the believer shall never be arraigned and condemned at God's bar.* This sentence that Pilate pronounced on Christ, gives evidence that God will never pronounce sentence against such: for had he intended to have arraigned them, he would never have suffered Christ, their surety, to be arraigned and condemned for them. Christ stood at this time before a higher judge than Pilate; he stood at God's bar as well as his. Pilate did but that which God's own hand and counsel had before determined to be done, and what God himself, at the same time, did; though God did it justly and holily, dealing with Christ as a creditor with a surety; Pilate most wickedly and basely, dealing with Christ as a corrupt judge, that shed the blood of a known innocent to pacify the people. But certain it is, that out of his condemnation flows our justification: and had not sentence been given against him, it must have been given against us.

O what a melting consideration is this! that out of his agony comes our victory; out of his condemnation, our justification; out of his pain, our ease; out of his stripes, our healing: out of his gall and vinegar, our honey; out of his curse, our blessing; out of his crown of thorns, our crown of glory; out of his death, our life: if he could not be released, it was that you might. If Pilate gave sentence against him, it was that the great God might never give sentence against you. If he yielded that it should be with Christ as they required, it was that it might be with our souls as well as we can desire. And therefore,

Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift.

Digitized by Google

SERMON XXV.

CHRIST's memorable Addreſs to the Daughters of Jeruſalem, in his Way to the Place of his Execution.

LUKE xxiii. 27, 28, &c.

And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which alſo bewailed and lamented him. But Jeſus turning unto them, ſaid, Daughters of Jeruſalem weep not for me, but weep for yourſelves, and for your children.

THE ſentence of death once given againſt Chriſt, the execution quickly follows. Away they lead him from Gabbatha to Golgotha, longing as much to be nailing him to the croſs, and feeding their eyes with his torments, as the eagle doth to be tearing the fleſh, and drinking the blood of that lamb ſhe hath ſeized in her talons, and is carrying away to the top of ſome rock to devour.

The Evangeliſt here obſerves a memorable paſſage that fell out in their way to the place of execution; and that is, the lamentations and wailing of ſome that followed him out of the city, who expreſſed their pity and ſorrow for him moſt tenderly and compaſſionately: all hearts were not hard, all eyes were not dry. "There followed him a great company of people, and of women, "which alſo bewailed and lamented him," &c.

In this paragraph we have two parts, *viz.* the lamentation of the daughters of Jeruſalem for Chriſt, and Chriſt's reply to them.

1. The lamentation of the daughters of Jeruſalem for Chriſt. Concerning them, we briefly enquire who they were, and why they mourned.

(1.) Who they were? The text calls them "* daughters, i. e. "inhabitants of Jeruſalem; for it is a Hebraiſm; as *daughters of* "*Zion, daughters of Iſrael.*" And it is like the greateſt part of them were women; and there were many of them, a troop of mourners, that followed Chriſt out of the city towards the place of his execution, with lamentations and wailings.

(2.) What the principle, or ground of theſe their lamentations was, is not agreed by thoſe that have pondered the ſtory. † Some are of opinion their tears and lamentations were but the effects and fruits of their more tender and ingenuous natures, which were

* Θυγατηρες Ιερουσαλημ, *i. e. mulieres Hieroſolymitanæ:* Hebraiſmus: ſic *filia Sionis.* Piſcat. in loc.

† Mr Anthony Burgeſs, Spiritual refining, p. 120.

Digitized by Google

moved and melted with so tragical and sad a spectacle as was now before them. It is well observed by a * judicious author, "That "the tragical story of some great and noble personage, full of he- "roical virtue and ingenuity (yet inhumanely and ungratefully "used) will thus work upon ingenuous spirits who read or hear "of it,—which when it reaches no higher, is so far from being "faith, that it is but a carnal and fleshly devotion, springing from "fancy, which is pleased with such a story and the principles of "ingenuity stirred towards one, who is of a noble spirit, and yet "abused. Such stories use to stir up a principle of humanity in "men unto a compassionate love; which Christ himself at his "suffering found fault with, as being not spiritual, nor raised "enough in those women that went weeping to see the Messiah "so handled. *Weep not for me*, (saith he) i. e. weep not so much "for this, to see me so unworthily handled by those for whom I "die." This is the principle from which some conceive those tears to flow.

But * Calvin attributes it to their faith, "looking upon these "mourners as a remnant reserved by the Lord in that miserable "dispersion; and though their faith was but weak, yet he judges "it credible that there was a secret seed of godliness in them, "which afterwards grew to a maturity, and brought forth fruit." And to the same sense others give their opinion also.

2. Let us consider Christ's reply to them; "weep not for me, "ye daughters of Jerusalem," *&c.* Strange, that Christ should forbid them to weep for him, yea for him under such unparalleled sufferings and miseries. If ever there was a heart-melting object in the world, it was here. O who could hold, whose heart was not petrified, and more obdurate than the senseless rocks? This reply of Christ undergoes a double sense and interpretation, suitable to the different construction of their sorrows. Those that look upon their sorrows as merely natural, take Christ's reply in a negative sense, prohibiting such tears as those. They that expound their sorrows as the fruit of faith, tell us, though the form of Christ's expression be negative, yet the sense is comparative, as Mat. ix. 13. "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice," i. e. mercy rather than sacrifice. So here, weep rather upon your own account, than mine; reserve your sorrows for the calamities coming upon yourselves and your children. You are greatly affected, I see, with the misery that is upon me; but mine will be quickly

* Dr Thomas Goodwin, in his Triumph of Faith, p. 38.

† *Videmus quosdam non fuisse oblitos doctrinæ et miraculorum Christi. Sic in misera illa dissipatione exiguas sibi reliquias servavit Deus. Quamvis autem imbecilla fuit istarum mulierum fides, credibile tamen est, occultum fuisse pietatis semen, unde postea germen prodiit.* Calvin.

Digitized by Google

over, yours will lie long. In which he ſhews his merciful and compaſſionate diſpoſition, who was ſtill more mindful of the troubles and burdens of others than of his own.

And indeed, the days of calamity coming upon them and their children were doleful days. What direful and unprecedented miſeries befel them at the breaking up and devaſtation of the city, who hath not read or heard? And who can refrain from tears that hears or reads it?

Now, if we take the words in the firſt ſenſe, as a prohibition of their merely natural and carnal affections, expreſſed in tears and lamentations for him, no otherwiſe than they would have been upon any other like tragical ſtory; then the obſervation from it will be this,

Doct. 1. *That melting affections and ſorrows, even from the ſenſe and conſideration of the ſufferings of Chriſt, are no infallible ſigns of grace.*

If you take it in the latter ſenſe, as the fruit of their faith, as tears flowing from a gracious principle; then the obſervation will be this,

Doct. 2. *That the believing meditation of what Chriſt ſuffered for us, is of great force and efficacy to melt and break the heart.*

I ſhall rather chuſe to proſecute both theſe branches, than to decide the controverſy; eſpecially ſince the notes gathered from either may be uſeful to us. And therefore I ſhall begin with the firſt, *viz.*

Doct. 1. *That melting affections and ſorrows, even from the ſenſe of Chriſt's ſufferings, are no infallible marks of grace.*

In this point I have two things to do, to prepare it for uſe.

Firſt, To ſhew, what the melting of the affections by way of grief and ſorrow is.

Secondly, That they may be ſo melted, even upon the account of Chriſt, and yet the heart remain unrenewed.

Firſt, What the melting of the affections, by way of grief and ſorrow, is.

Tears are nothing elſe but the juice of a mind oppreſſed, and ſqueezed with grief. Grief compreſſes the heart; the heart ſo compreſſed and ſqueezed, vents itſelf ſometimes into tears, ſighs, groans, *&c.* and this is two-fold; *gracious*, and wholly ſupernatural; or *common*, and altogether natural. The gracious melting or ſorrow

Digitized by Google

of the soul, is likewise two-fold; *habitual* or *actual*. Habitual godly sorrow is that gracious disposition, inclination, or tendency of the renewed heart to mourn and melt, when any just occasion is presented to the soul that calls for such sorrow. It is expressed, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. "By taking away the heart of stone, and giving "a heart of flesh;" i. e. a heart impressive, and yielding to such arguments and considerations as move it to mourning.

Actual sorrow is the expression and manifestation of that its inclination upon just occasions; and it is expressed two ways, either by the *internal* effects of it, which are the heaviness, shame, loathing, resolution, and holy revenge begotten in the soul upon the account of sin: or also by more *external* and visible effects, as sighs, groans, tears, *&c.* the former is essential to godly sorrow, the latter contingent and accidental, much depending upon the natural temperature and constitution of the body.

Natural and common meltings are nothing else but the effects of a better temper, and the fruit of a more ingenuous spirit, and easier constitution, which shews itself on any other, as well as upon spiritual occasions: as Austin said, he could weep plentifully when he read the story of Dido. The history of Christ is a very tragical and pathetical history, and may melt an ingenuous nature, where there is no renewed principles at all. So that,

Secondly, Our affections may be melted, even upon the score and account of Christ; and yet that is no infallible evidence of a gracious heart. And the reasons for it are,

1. Because we find all sorts of affections discovered by such as have been no better than temporary believers. The stony-ground hearers in Mat. xiii. 20. "received the word with joy;" and so did John's hearers also, who for "a season rejoiced in his light," John iii. 35. Now, if the affections of joy under the word may be exercised, why not of sorrow also? If the comfortable things revealed in the gospel may stir up the one, by a parity of reason, the sad things it reveals may answerably work upon the other. Even those Israelites whom Moses told they should fall by the sword, and not prosper, for the Lord would not be with them, because they were turned away from him; yet when Moses rehearsed the message of the Lord in their ears, they mourned greatly, Numb. xiv. 39. I know the Lord pardoned many of them their iniquities, though he took vengeance on their inventions; and yet it is as true, that with many of them God was not well-pleased, 1 Cor. x. 5. Many instances of their weeping and mourning before the Lord we find in this sacred history; and yet their hearts were not stedfast with God.

2. Because though the object about which our affections and passions are moved, may be spiritual; yet the motives and prin-

Digitized by Google

ciples that set them on work, may be but carnal and natural ones. When I see a person affected in the hearing of the word, or prayer, even unto tears, I cannot presently conclude, surely this is the effect of grace: for it is possible, the pathetical quality of subject-matter, the rhetoric of the speaker, the very affecting tone, and modulation of the voice, may draw tears as well as faith working upon the spirituality, and deep concernment the soul hath in those things.

Whilst Austin was a Manichee, he sometimes heard Ambrose; and, saith he, "I was greatly affected in hearing him, even, unto "tears many times:" howbeit, it was not the heavenly nature of the subject, but the abilities and rare parts of the speaker that so affected him. And this was the case of Ezekiel's hearers, chap. xxxiii. 32.

Again, 3. These motions of the affections may rather be a fit and mood, than the very frame and temper of the soul. Now there is a vast difference betwixt these; there are times and seasons when the roughest and most obdurate hearts may be pensive and tender*: but that is not its temper and frame, but only a fit, a pang, a transient passion. So the Lord complains of them, Hos. vi. 4. "O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? O Judah, what shall "I do unto thee? for your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as "the early dew, it goeth away." And so he complains, Psal. lxxviii. 34, 35, 36. "When he slew them, then they sought him: "and they returned and enquired early after God. And they re-"membered that God was their rock, and the most high God their "redeemer; nevertheless they did flatter him with their lips, and "lied unto him with their tongues." For had this remembrance of God been the gracious temper of their souls, it would have continued with them; they would not have been thus wavering; thus hot and cold with God, as they were. Therefore we conclude, that we cannot infer a work of grace upon the heart, simply and merely from the meltings and thaws that are sometimes upon it. And hence, for your use, I shall infer, that,

Inference 1. If such as sometimes feel their hearts thawed and melted with the consideration of the sufferings of Christ, may yet be deceived; *What cause have they to fear and tremble, whose hearts are as unrelenting as the rocks, yielding to nothing that is proposed, or urged upon them?* How many such are there, of whom we may say, as Christ speaks of the inflexible Jews, "We have piped "unto you, but ye have not danced; we have mourned unto "you, but you have not lamented? Mat. xi. 17. They must in-

* *Illa tantum dicuntur inesse animæ, quæ insunt per modum quietis*, i. e. These things alone are said to be in the soul, which are in it habitually.

Digitized by Google

evitably come short of heaven, who come so short of those that do come short of heaven. If those perish that have rejoiced under the promises, and mourned under the threats of the word; what shall become of them that are as unconcerned, and untouched by what they hear, as the seats they sit on, or the dead that lie under their feet? Who are given up to such hardness of heart, that nothing can touch or affect them? One would think, the consideration of the *sixth chapter to the Hebrews* should startle such men and women, and make them cry out, Lord, what will become of such a senseless, stupid, dead creature as I am? If they that have been enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, may, notwithstanding such high raised affections as these, so fall away, that it shall be impossible to renew them again by repentance; what shall we then say, or think of his estate, to whom the most penetrating and awakening truths are no more than a tale that is told? The fire and hammer of the gospel can neither melt nor break them; they are iron and brass, Jer. vi. 28, 29.

Inference 2. If such as these may eternally miscarry; then *let all look carefully to their foundation, and see that they do not bless themselves in a thing of nought.* It is manifest from 1 Cor. x. 12. that many souls stand exceeding dangerously, who are yet strongly conceited of their own safety. And if you please to consult those scriptures in the margin*, you shall find vain confidence to be a ruling folly over the greatest part of men; and that which is the utter overthrow, and undoing of multitudes of professors.

Now there is nothing more apt to beget and breed this vain soul-undoing confidence, than the stirrings and meltings of our affections about spiritual things, whilst the heart remains unrenewed all the while. For (as a grave divine† hath well observed) such a man seems to have all that is required of a Christian, and herein to have attained the very end of all knowledge; which is operation and influence upon the heart and affections.

Indeed (thinks such a poor deluded soul) if I did hear, read, or pray, without any inward affections, with a dead, cold, and unconcerned heart; or if I did make a shew of zeal and affection in duties, and had it not, well might I suspect myself to be a self-cozening hypocrite; but it is not so with me, I feel my heart really melted many times, when I read the sufferings of Christ; I feel my heart raised and ravished with strange joys and comforts, when I hear the glory of heaven opened in the gospel: Indeed if

* Gal. vi. 3, 4. John viii. 54. Rom. ii. 18, 19, 21. Mat. xxv. 11. 12. Mat. vii. 22. † Mr Anthony Burgess.

Digitized by Google

it were not so with me, I might doubt the root of the matter is wanting; but if to my knowledge, affections be added; a melting heart joined with a knowing head, then I may be confident all is well. I have often heard ministers cautioning and warning their people not to rest satisfied with idle and unpractical notions in their understandings, but to labour for impressions upon their hearts; this I have attained, and therefore what danger of me? I have often heard it given as a mark of a hypocrite, that he hath light in his head, but it sheds not down its influence upon the heart: whereas in those that are sincere, it works on their heart and affections: So I find it with me, therefore I am in a most safe estate. O soul! of all the false signs of grace, none more dangerous than those that most resemble true ones; and never doth the devil more surely and incurably destroy, than when transformed into an angel of light. What if these meltings of thy heart be but a flower of nature? What if thou art more beholden to a good temper of body, than a gracious change of spirit for these things? Well, so it may be. Therefore be not secure, but fear, and watch. Possibly, if thou wouldest but search thine own heart in this matter, thou mayest find, that any other pathetical, moving story, will have the like effects upon thee. Possibly too, thou mayest find, that, notwithstanding all thy raptures and joys at the hearing of heaven, and its glory, yet after that pang is over, thy heart is habitually earthly, and thy conversation is not there. For all thou canst mourn at the relations of Christ's sufferings, thou art not so affected with sin, that was the meritorious cause of the sufferings of Christ, as to crucify one corruption, or deny the next temptation, or part with any way of sin that is gainful, or pleasurable to thee for his sake.

Why now, reader, if it be so with thee, what art thou the better for the fluency of thy affections? Dost thou think in earnest, that Christ hath the better thoughts of thee, because thou canst shed tears for him, when notwithstanding thou every day piercest and woundest him? O! be not deceived. Nay, for ought I know, thou mayest find, upon a narrow search, that thou puttest thy tears in the room of Christ's blood, and givest the confidence and dependence of thy soul to them; and if so, they shall never do thee any good.

O therefore search thy heart, reader, be not too confident; take not up too easily upon such poor weak grounds as these, a soul-undoing confidence. Always remember the wheat and tares resemble each other in their first springing up; that an egg is not liker to an egg, than hypocrisy, in some shapes and forms into which it can cast itself, is like a genuine work of grace. O remember that among the ten virgins, that is, the reformed professors of religion,

Digitized by Google

that have caſt off and ſeparated themſelves from the worſhip and defilements of Antichriſt, five of them were fooliſh.

There be firſt, that ſhall be laſt; and laſt, that ſhall be firſt, Mat. xix. 30. Great is the deceitfulneſs of our hearts, Jer. xvii. 9. And many are the ſubtleties and devices of Satan, 2 Cor. xi. 3. Many alſo are the aſtoniſhing examples of ſelf-deceiving ſouls recorded in the word. Remember what you lately read of Judas. Great alſo will be the exactneſs of the laſt judgment. And how confident ſoever you be, that you ſhall ſpeed well in that day, yet ſtill remember that trial is not yet paſt. Your final ſentence is not yet come from the mouth of your Judge. This I ſpeak not to affright and trouble, but excite and warn you. The loſs of a ſoul is no ſmall loſs, and, upon ſuch grounds as theſe, they are every day caſt away.

This may ſuffice to be ſpoken to the firſt obſervation, built on this ſuppoſition, that it was but a pang of mere natural affection in them. But if it were the effect of a better principle, the fruit of their faith, as ſome judge; then I told you, the obſervation from it would be this,

Doct. *That the believing meditation of what Chriſt ſuffered for us, is of great force and efficacy to melt and break the heart.*

It is promiſed, Zech. xii. 10. that "they ſhall look upon him "whom they have pierced, and mourn for him, as one mourn-"eth for his only ſon, and ſhall be in bitterneſs for him, as one "that is in bitterneſs for his firſt-born." Ponder ſeriouſly, here, the *ſpring* and *motive*, *They ſhall look upon me*; it is the eye of faith that melts and breaks the heart. The *effect* of ſuch a ſight of Chriſt; they ſhall look and *mourn*; be in bitterneſs and ſorrow. True repentance is a drop out of the eye of faith; and the meaſure or degree of that ſorrow cauſed by a believing view of Chriſt. To expreſs which, two of the fulleſt inſtances of grief we read of, are borrowed; that of a tender father, mourning over a dear and only ſon; that of the people of Iſrael, mourning over Joſiah, that peerleſs prince, in the valley of Megiddo.

Now to ſhew you how the believing meditation of Chriſt, and his ſufferings, come kindly and ſavingly to break and melt down the gracious heart, I ſhall propound theſe four conſiderations of the heart-breaking efficacy of faith, eying a crucified Jeſus.

Firſt, The very *realizing* of Chriſt and his ſufferings by faith, is a moſt affecting and melting thing. Faith is a true glaſs that repreſents all thoſe his ſufferings and agonies to the life. It preſents them not as a fiction, or idle tale, but as a true and faithful narrative. This (ſaith faith) is a true and faithful ſaying, that Chriſt

Digitized by Google

was not only clothed in our fleſh; even he that is over all, God bleſſed for ever, the only Lord, the Prince of the kings of the earth, became a man; but it is alſo moſt certain, that in this body of his fleſh, he grappled with the infinite wrath of God, which filled his ſoul with horror and amazement; that the Lord of life did hang dead upon the tree; that he went as a lamb to the ſlaughter, and was as a ſheep dumb before the ſhearer; that he endured all this, and more than any finite underſtanding can comprehend, in my room and ſtead; for my ſake he there groaned and bled; for my pride, earthlineſs, luſt, unbelief, hardneſs of heart, he endured all this. I ſay, to realize the ſufferings of Chriſt thus, is of great power to affect the coldeſt, dulleſt heart. You cannot imagine the difference there is in preſenting things as realities, with convincing and ſatisfying evidences, and our looking on them as a fiction or uncertainty.

Secondly, But faith can apply as well as realize; and if it do ſo, it muſt needs overcome the heart.

Ah! Chriſtian, canſt thou look upon Jeſus as ſtanding in thy room, to bear the wrath of a Deity for thee? Canſt thou think on it, and not melt? That when thou, like Iſaac, waſt bound to the altar, to be offered up to juſtice, Chriſt, like the ram, was caught in the thicket, and offered in thy room. When thy ſins had raiſed a fearful tempeſt, that threatened every moment to entomb thee in a ſee of wrath, Jeſus Chriſt was thrown over to appeaſe that ſtorm! Say, reader, can thy heart dwell one hour upon ſuch a ſubject as this? Canſt thou with faith, preſent Chriſt to thyſelf, as he was taken down from the croſs, drenched in his own blood, and ſay, Theſe were the wounds that he received for me; this is he that loved me, and gave himſelf for me; out of theſe wounds comes that balm that heals my ſoul; out of theſe ſtripes my peace: When he hanged upon the croſs, he bore my name upon his breaſt, like the high prieſt. It was love, pure love, ſtrong love to my poor ſoul; to the ſoul of an enemy that drew him down from heaven, and all the glory he had there, to endure theſe ſorrows in ſoul and body for me.

O you cannot hold up your hearts long to the piercing thoughts of this, but your bowels will be pained, and, like Joſeph, you will ſeek a place to vent your hearts in.

Thirdly, Faith cannot only realize and apply Chriſt, and his death, but it can reaſon and conclude ſuch things from his death, as will fill the ſoul with affection to him, and break the heart in pieces, in his preſence. When it views Chriſt as dead, it infers, Is Chriſt dead for me? then was I dead in law, ſentenced and condemned to die eternally; 2 Cor. v. 14. "If one died for all, "then were all dead." How woful was my caſe when the law

Digitized by Google

had paſſed ſentence on me? I could not be ſure when I lay down, but that it might be executed before I roſe; nothing but a puff of breath betwixt my ſoul and hell.

Again, Is Chriſt dead for me? then I ſhall never die. If he be condemned, I am acquitted. "Who ſhall lay any thing to the "charge of God's elect? It is God that juſtifieth, it is Chriſt that "died," Rom. viii. 34. My ſoul is eſcaped as a bird out of the ſnare of the fowler: I was condemned, but am now cleared; I was dead, but am now alive; O the unſearchable riches of Chriſt! O love paſt finding out!

Again, Did God give up Chriſt to ſuch miſeries and ſufferings for me? * How ſhall he with-hold any thing from me? "He that "ſpared not his own Son, will doubtleſs with him freely give me "all things," Rom. viii. 32. Now I may reſt upon him for pardon, peace, acceptance, and glory for my ſoul. Now I may rely upon him ſafely for proviſion, protection, and all ſupplies for my body. Chriſt is the root of theſe mercies; he is more than all theſe, he is nearer and dearer to God than any other gift. O what a bleſſed, happy, comfortable ſtate hath he now brought my ſoul into!

To conclude, Did Chriſt endure all theſe things for me? then it is paſt doubt, he will never leave nor forſake me: It cannot be, that after he has endured all this, he will caſt off the ſouls for whom he endured it. Here the ſoul is evangelically broken, conſidering the mercies that emerge and flow to it out of the ſea of Chriſt's blood.

Fourthly, and laſtly, Faith can not only realize, apply, and infer, but it can alſo compare the love of Chriſt in all this, both with his dealings with others, and with the ſouls dealing with Chriſt, who loved it. To compare Chriſt's dealings with others, is moſt affecting: he hath not dealt with every one, as with me; nay, few there are that can ſpeak of ſuch mercies as I have from him. How many are there that have no part nor portion in his blood? Who muſt bear that wrath in their own perſons, that he bare himſelf for me! He eſpied me out, and ſingled me forth to be the object of his love, leaving thouſands and millions ſtill unreconciled; not that I was better than they, for I was the greateſt of ſinners, far from righteouſneſs, as unlikely as any to be the object of ſuch grace, and love: my companions in ſin are left, and I am taken. Now the ſoul is full, the heart grows big, too big to contain itſelf.

Yea, faith helps the ſoul to compare the love of Chriſt to it, with

* He who ſent his Son, hath ſent down the Spirit, and promiſed his favour; is there any thing ſo great that he will refuſe? *Prof.*

Digitized by Google

the returns it hath made to him for that love. And what, my soul! hath thy carriage to Christ been, since this grace that wants a name, appeared to thee? Hast thou returned love for love? Love suitable to such love? Hast thou prized, valued, and esteemed this Christ, according to his own worth in himself, or his kindness to thee? Ah no, I have grieved, pierced, wounded his heart a thousand times since that, by my ingratitude; I have suffered every trifle to jostle him out of my heart? I have neglected him a thousand times, and made him say, Is this thy kindness to thy friend? Is this the reward I shall have for all that I have done, and suffered for thee? Wretch that I am, how have I requited the Lord! This shames, humbles, and breaks the heart.

And when from such sights of faith, and considerations as these, the heart is thus affected, it affords a good argument, indeed, that thou art gone beyond all the attainments of temporary believers; flesh and blood hath not revealed this.

Inference 1. Have the believing meditations of Christ, and his sufferings, such heart-melting influences? *Then sure there is but little faith among men.* Our dry eyes and hard hearts, are evidences against us, that we are strangers to the sights of faith.

God be merciful to the hardness of your hearts. How is Christ and his love slighted among men! How shallow doth his blood run to some eyes? O that my head were waters, and mine eyes fountains of tears for this! What monsters are carnal hearts? We are as if God had made us without affections, as if all ingenuity and tenderness were dried up. Our ears are so accustomed to the sounds of Christ, and his blood, that now they are become as common things. If a child die, we can mourn over our dead; but who mourns for Christ as for an only son? We may say of faith, when men and women sit so unaffected under the gospel, as Martha said of Christ concerning her brother Lazarus, If thou (precious faith) hadst been here, so many hearts had not been dead this day, and in this duty. Faith is that burning-glass which contracts the beams of the grace, and love, and wisdom, and power of Jesus Christ together, reflects these on the heart, and makes it burn; but without it, we feel nothing savingly.

Inf. 2. Have the believing meditations of Christ, and his sufferings, such heart-melting influences? *Then surely the proper order of raising the affections, is to begin at the exercise of faith.* It grieves me to see how many poor Christians strive with their own dead hearts, endeavouring to raise and affect them, but cannot: they complain and strive, strive and complain, but can discover no love to the Lord, no brokenness of heart; they go to this ordinance and that, to one duty and another, hoping that now the Lord will affect it, and fill the sails; but come back disappointed and

Digitized by Google

ashamed, like the troops of Tema. Poor Christian, hear me one word; possibly it may do thy business, and stand thee in more stead, than all the methods thou hast yet used. If thou wouldst indeed get a heart evangelically melted for sin, and broken with the kindly sense of the grace and love of Christ, thy way is not to force thy affections, nor to vex thyself, and go about complaining of a hard heart, but set thyself to believe, realize, apply, infer, and compare by faith as you have been directed; and see what this will do: "They shall look on me whom they have pierced, and "mourn." This is the way and proper method to raise the heart, and break it.

Inf. 3. Is this the way to get a truly broken heart? *Then let these that have attained brokenness of heart this way, bless the Lord whilst they live, for so choice a mercy;* and that upon a double account.

1. For as much as a heart so affected and melted, is not attainable by any natural or unrenewed person; if they would give all they have in the world, it cannot purchase one such tear, or groan over Christ; mark, what characters of special grace it bears, in the description that is made of it, in that forementioned place, Zech. xii. 10. Such a frame as this is not born with us, or to be acquired by us; for it is there said to be poured out by the Lord upon us, "I will pour upon them," &c. There is no hypocrisy or dissimulation in these mournings, they being compared to the mourning of a man for his only son: and sure parents hearts are not untouched when they behold such sights.

Nature is not the principle of it, but faith; for it is there said, they shall look on me; i. e. believe and mourn. *Self* is not the end and centre of these sorrows; it is not so much for damning ourselves, as for piercing Christ: "They shall look on me whom "they have pierced, and shall mourn;" so that this is sorrow after God, and not a flash of nature, as discoursed in the former point. Therefore you have cause to bless the Lord, whilst you live for such a special mercy as this is. And,

2. As it is the right, so it is the choicest, and most precious gift that can be given you; for it is ranked among the prime mercies of the new covenant, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. This shall be the covenant; "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I "put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your "flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh." What wouldest thou have given sometimes for such a heart as now thou hast, though it be not yet as thou wouldst have it? And however you value and esteem it, God himself sets no common value on it: for mark what he saith of it, Psal. ii. 17. "The sacrifices of God are a "broken heart: a broken and a contrite spirit, O God thou wilt

Digitized by Google

" not deſpiſe;" i. e. God is more delighted with ſuch a heart, than with all the ſacrifices in the world; one groan, one tear, flowing from faith, and the ſpirit of adoption, are more to him, than the cattle upon a thouſand hills. And to the ſame ſenſe he ſpeaks again, Iſa. lxvi. 1, 2. Thus ſaith the Lord, The heaven is " my throne, and the earth is my footſtool: Where is the houſe " that ye build to me? And where is the place of my reſt?—But " to this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a con- " trite ſpirit, and trembleth at my word;" q. d. All the magnificent temples and glorious ſtructures in the world, give me no pleaſure in compariſon of ſuch a broken heart as this.

O then, for ever bleſs the Lord, that hath done that for you, which none elſe could do, and which he has done but for few beſides you.

SERMON XXVI.

Of the Nature and Quality of CHRIST's Death.

ACTS ii. 23.

Him being delivered by the determinate counſel and fore-knowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and ſlain.

HAVING conſidered, in order, the preparative acts for the death of Chriſt, both on his own part, and on his enemies part, we now come to conſider the * death of Chriſt itſelf, which was the principal part of his humiliation, and is the chief pillar of our conſolation. Here we ſhall in order conſider,

Firſt, The kind and nature of the death he died.

Secondly, The manner in which he bare it, viz. patiently, ſolitarily, and inſtructively; dropping divers holy and inſtructive leſſons upon all that were about him, in his ſeven laſt words upon the croſs.

Thirdly, The funeral ſolemnities at his burial.

Fourthly, and laſtly, The weighty ends and great deſigns of his death. In all which particulars, as we proceed to diſcuſs and open them, you will have an account of the deep debaſement and humiliation of the Son of God.

In this text, we have an account of the kind and nature of that

* The death of Chriſt was the laſt ſtep of his humiliation; by which he underwent the moſt grievous, the moſt dreadful, and the greateſt puniſhment for the ſins of men. *Anon.*

Digitized by Google

death which Christ died: as also of the causes of it, both principal and instrumental.

First, The kind and nature of the death Christ died, which is here described more generally, as a violent death, *Ye have slain him:* and more particularly, as a most ignominious, cursed, dishonourable death; *ye have crucified him.*

Secondly, The causes of it are here likewise expressed: and that both principal and instrumental. The principal cause, permitting, ordering, and disposing all things about it, was the determinate counsel and fore-knowledge of God. There was not an action or circumstance but came under this most wise and holy counsel and determination of God.

The instruments effecting it were their wicked hands. *This fore-knowledge and counsel of God, as it did no way necessitate or enforce them to it; so neither doth it excuse their fact from the least aggravation of its sinfulness. It did no more compel or force their wicked hands to do what they did, than the mariner's hoisting up his sails, to take the wind to serve his design, compels the wind. And it cannot excuse their action from one circumstance of sin; because God's end and manner of acting was one thing, their end and manner of acting another. His, most pure and holy; theirs, most malicious and daringly wicked. *Idem quod duo faciunt, non est idem.* To this purpose a grave divine well expresses it.

In respect of God, Christ's death was justice and mercy. In respect of man, it was murder and cruelty. In respect of himself, it was obedience and humility†. Hence our note is,

Doct. *That our Lord Jesus Christ was not only put to death, but to the worst of deaths, even the death of the cross.*

To this the apostle gives a plain testimony, Phil. ii. 8. "He "became obedient to death, even the death of the cross;" where his humiliation is both specified; he was humbled to death; and aggravated by a most emphatical reduplication, even the death of the cross. So Acts v. 30. "Jesus whom ye slew and hanged on a "tree:" *q. d.* it did not suffice you to put him to a violent death, but you also put him to the most base, vile and ignominious death; "you hanged him on a tree."

On this point we will discuss these three particulars, viz. The

* The Jews cannot be excusable, for they acted not in obedience to the secret purpose of God; but, being excited by hatred and corrupt affections, they slew the innocent Jesus, contrary to the law. *Parens.*

† Morning Exercises at St Giles's, p. 289.

Digitized by Google

nature or *kind*, the *manner* and *reasons* of Christ's death upon the tree.

I. I shall open the kind or nature of his death, by shewing you that it was a *violent*, *painful*, *shameful*, *cursed*, *slow*, and *succourless* death.

First, It was a violent death that Christ died. Violent in itself, though voluntary on his part. "He was cut off out of the land of "the living," Isa. liii. 8. And yet "he laid down his life of him-"self; no man took it from him," John x. 17. I call his death violent, because he died not a natural death, i. e. he lived not till nature was consumed with age, as it is in many who live till their *balsamum radicale*, "radical moisture," like the oil in the lamp, be quite consumed, and then go out like an expiring lamp. It was not so with Christ: for he was but in the flower and prime of his time when he died. And indeed, he must either die a violent death, or not die at all; partly, because there was no sin in him, to open a door to natural death; as it doth in all others. Partly, because else his death had not been a sacrifice acceptable and satisfactory to God for us. That which died of itself was never offered up to God; but that which was slain, when it was in its full strength and health. The temple was a type of the body of Christ, John ii. 19. Now, when the temple was destroyed, it did not drop down as an ancient structure decayed by time, but was pulled down by violence, when it was standing in its full strength. Therefore he is said to *suffer death*, and to be *put to death* for us in the flesh, 1 Pet. iii. 18. That is the first thing. It was a violent, though a voluntary death. For violent is not opposed to voluntary, but to natural.

Secondly, The death of the cross was a most painful death. Indeed in this death were many deaths, contrived in one. The cross was a rack as well as a gibbet. The pains which Christ suffered upon the cross, are by the apostle emphatically stiled τας ὠδινας τε θανατε, Acts ii. 24. "The pains of death:" but properly they signify the pangs of travail: yea, the birth-pangs, the most acute sorrows of a travailing woman. His soul was in travail, Isa. liii. his body in bitter pangs; and being as Aquinas speaks, *optime complectionatus*, of the most excellent crasis, exact and just temperament; his senses were more acute and delicate than ordinary; and all the time of his suffering, so they continued; not in the least blunted, dulled, or rebated, by the pains he suffered.

"The death of Christ, doubtless, contained the greatest and "acutest pains imaginable*: because these pains of Christ alone,

* *Continebat pœnas maximas, quia miseriam illam totam æquabat, quæ hominum peccata merebantur.* Amef. meditat.

Digitized by Google

"were intended to equalize all that misery which the sin of men "deserved," all that pain which the damned shall, and the elect deserve to feel. Now, to have pains meeting at once upon one person, equivalent to all the pains of the damned; judge you what a plight Christ was in.

Thirdly, The death of the cross was a shameful death: not only because the crucified were stripped quite naked, and so exposed as spectacles of shame; but mainly, because it was a kind of death which was appointed for the basest, and vilest of men.

The free-men when they committed capital crimes, were not condemned to the cross. No, that was looked upon as the death appointed for slaves*. Tacitus calls it *servile supplicium*, the punishment of a slave: and to the same sense Juvenal speaks, *pone crucem servo*, put the cross upon the back of a slave. As they had a great esteem of a free-man, so they manifested it, even when they had forfeited their lives, in cutting them off by more honourable kinds of death. This, by hanging on the tree, was always accounted most ignominious. To this day we say of him that is hanged, He dies the death of a dog: and yet it is said of our Lord Jesus, Heb. xii. 2. He not only endured the cross, but also despised the shame. Obedience to his Father's will, and zeal for our salvation, made him digest the shame of it, and despise the baseness that was in it.

Fourthly, The death of the cross was a cursed death. Upon that account he is said to be "made καταρα, a curse for us; For it is "written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree," Gal. iii. 13. "His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but "thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; for he that is hang-"ed is accursed of God†." The very symbol of lifting them up betwixt heaven and earth carried much shame in it. For it implieth this in it, that the person so used, was so execrable, base, and vile, that he deserved not to tread upon the earth or touch the surface of the ground any more. And the command for burying them that day, doth not at all mitigate, but rather aggravates this curse: speaking the person to be so abominable, that as he is lifted up into the air, and hanging between heaven and earth, as unworthy ever to set foot more upon the earth; so when dead, they were to hasten to bury him, that such an abominable sight

---

* *Vide Lypsium de cruce, l. 1. c. 11. Ingenui hominis nulla est estimatio.*

Homer in his 21st Odysse, calls this death μη καθαρον, i. e. impure; and Eustathius μιαρον, i. e. base.

† This is appointed, not in honour of the burial of the dead body, but to the end that such a body, which was accursed, might be quickly removed from the surface of the earth, that so the earth might not be defiled. *Thus Bonfrerius.*

Digitized by Google

might be removed as soon as might be, from before the eyes of men; and that the earth might not be defiled, by his lying on the surface of it, when taken down.

However, as the learned Junius hath judiciously observed, this curse is only a ceremonial curse; for otherwise it is neither in itself, nor by the law of nature, or by civil law, more execrable than any other death. And the main reason why the ceremonial law affixed the curse to this, rather than to any other death, was principally with respect to the death Christ was to die. And therefore, reader, see and admire the providence of God, that Christ should die by a Roman, and not by a Judaic law. For crucifying, or hanging on a tree, was a Roman punishment, and not in use among the Jews. But the scriptures cannot be broken.

Fifthly, The death of the cross was a very slow and lingering death. They died leisurely. Which still increaseth and aggravateth the misery of it. If a man must die a violent death, it is a favour to be dispatched: as they that are pressed to death, beg for more weight. And it is a favour to those that are hanged, to be smitten on the breast, or plucked by the heels by their friends. On the contrary, to hang long in the midst of tortures, to have death coming upon us with a slow pace, that we may feel every tread of it, as it comes on, is a misery.

The tyrant that heard the poor martyr was dead under his first torments, said, as one disappointed, *Evasit*, "He hath escaped "me." For he intended to have kept him much longer under torments. And it was the cruel counsel of another to his executioner; "Let him die so as he may feel himself how he dies*." And surely in this respect it was worse for Christ, than any other that ever was nailed to the tree. For all the while he hanged there, he remained full of life and acute sense. His life departed not gradually, but was whole in him to the last. Other men die gradually, and, towards their end, their sense of pain is much blunted. They faulter, and expire by degrees, but Christ stood under the pains of death in his full strength. † His life was whole in him. This was evident by the mighty out-cry he made when he gave up the ghost, which argued him to be full of strength, contrary to the experience of all other men. Which made the centurion when he heard it, to conclude, "Surely this was the "Son of God," Mark xv. 37, 39.

Sixthly, It was a succourless and helpless death to Christ. Sometimes they gave to malefactors amidst their torments, vinegar and

* *Moriatur, ut sentiat se mori.*

† Christ retained life and strength so long as he pleased, and laid them down when he pleased. *Amef.*

Digitized by Google

myrrh, to blunt, dull, and ſtupify their ſenſes. And if they hanged long, would break their bones to diſpatch them out of their pains. Chriſt had none of this favour. Inſtead of vinegar and myrrh, they gave him vinegar and gall to drink, to aggravate his torments. And for the breaking of his bones he prevented it, by dying before they came to break his legs. For the ſcriptures muſt be fulfilled, which ſay, *Not a bone of him ſhall be broken.*

This now was the kind and nature of that death he died. Even the violent, painful, ſhameful, curſed, ſlow, and ſuccourleſs death of the croſs. An ancient puniſhment both among the Romans and Carthaginians*. But in honour of Chriſt, who died this death, Conſtantine the Great abrogated it by law, ordaining that none ſhould ever be crucified any more, becauſe Chriſt died that death.

Secondly, As to the manner of the execution. They that were condemned to the death of the croſs, (ſaith † a learned Antiquary of our own) bare their croſs upon their own ſhoulders, to the place of execution. They were ſtripped of all their clothes, for they ſuffered naked. And then were faſtened to the croſs with nails.

The manner how that was done ‡, one gives us in theſe words, They ſtretched him out (meaning Chriſt) like another Iſaac upon his own burden, the croſs; that ſo they might take meaſure of the holes. And though the print of his blood upon it, gave them the true length of his body; yet how ſtrictly do they take it longer than the truth. Thereby at once to crucify and rack him. Then being nailed, like as Moſes lifted up the ſerpent, ſo was the Son of man lifted up. And when the croſs, with the Lord faſtened on it, fell into its ſocket, or baſis, it jerked the whole, and every part of his ſacred body. And the whole weight hanging upon his nailed hands, the wounds by degrees grew wider and wider: till at laſt he expired in the midſt of thoſe tortures.

And that the equity of their proceedings might the better appear to the people, the cauſe of the puniſhment was written in capital letters, and fixed to the tree over the head of the malefactor. Of this appendant to this kind of death, I ſhall ſpeak diſtinctly in the next ſermon, before I come to handle the manner of his death: there being ſo much of providence in that circumſtance, as invites us to ſpend more than a few tranſient thoughts upon it. Meanwhile, in the next place,

Thirdly, We will enquire briefly into the reaſons why Chriſt

* Sozom, lib. 1. cap. 8.
† Godwin's Antiq. l. 3. ſect. 3. p. 192.
‡ Herles' Contemplat. of Chriſt's paſſion.

Digitized by Google

died this, rather than any other kind of death. And amongst others, these three are obvious.

First, Because Christ must bear the curse in his death, and a curse by law was affixed to no other kind of death, as it was to this. The learned Masius upon Joshua ii. 29. commenting upon the death of King Ai, who was hanged upon the tree, until the evening, tells us, "* That the principal reason of the malediction "and execrableness of his death was, because the death of Christ "was prefigured in that mystery." Christ came to take away the curse from us by this death; and so must be made a curse. On him must all the curses of the moral law lie, which were due to us. And that nothing might be wanting to make it a full curse, the very death he died, must also have a ceremonial curse upon it.

Secondly, Christ died this, rather than any other kind of death; to fulfil the types, and prefigurations that of old were made with respect to it. All the sacrifices were lifted up from the earth, upon the altar. But especially the brazen serpent prefigured this death, Numb. xxi. 9. Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole. And, saith Christ, John iii. 14. "As Moses lifted "up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up," that so he might correspond with that lively type, made of him in the wilderness.

Thirdly, Christ died this, rather than any other death, because it was predicted of him, and in him must all the predictions, as well as types, be fully accomplished. The psalmist spake in the person of Christ, of this death, as plainly as if he had rather been writing the history of what was done, than a prophecy of what was to be done, so many years afterwards, Psal. xxii. 16, 17. "For dogs "have compassed me about, the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and feet; I may tell all my "bones; they look and stare upon me." Which hath a manifest reference to the distension of all his members upon the tree, which was a rack to him. So Zech. xii. 10. "They shall look upon me, "whom they have pierced." Yea, Christ himself had foretold the death he should die, in the forecited, John iii. 14. saying, "He must be lifted up," i. e. hanged between heaven and earth. And the scriptures must be fulfilled.

Thus you have a brief account both of the kind, manner, and reasons of this death of Christ. The improvement of it, you have in the following inferences of truth, deducible from it.

---

* *Potissima causa maledictionis hujus est, quia Christus in mysterio præfigurabatur.* Masius.

Digitized by Google

Inference 1. Is Christ dead? and did he die the violent, painful, shameful, cursed, slow, and succourless death of the cross? *Then surely there is forgivenness with God, and plenteous redemption for the greatest of sinners, that by faith apply the blood of the cross to their poor guilty souls.* So speaks the apostle, Col. i. 14. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, "even the forgiveness of sins." And 1 John i. 7. "The blood "of Christ cleanseth us from all sin." Two things will make this demonstrable.

A demonstration of pardon for the greatest of sinners.

First, That there is a sufficient efficacy in this blood of the cross to expiate the greatest sins.

Secondly, That the efficacy of it is designed and intended by God for believing sinners. How clearly do both these propositions lie in the word?

First, That there is sufficient efficacy in the blood of the cross, to expiate and wash away the greatest sins. This is manifest, for it is *precious blood*, as it is called, 1 Pet. i. 18. "Ye were not re- "deemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold; but with "the precious blood of the Son of God." This preciousness of the blood of Christ riseth from the union it hath with that person, who is over all, God blessed for ever. And on that account is stiled the blood of God, Acts xx. 28; and so it becomes royal, princely blood: Yea, such for the dignity, and efficacy of it, as never was created, or shall ever run in any other veins but his. The blood of all the creatures in the world, even a sea of human blood bears no more proportion to the precious and excellent blood of Christ, than a dish of common water, to a river of liquid gold. On the account of its invaluable preciousness, it becomes satisfying and reconciling blood to God. So the apostle speaks, Col. i. 20. "And (having made peace through the blood of his "cross) by him to reconcile all things to himself; by him, I say, "whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven." The same blood which is *redemption* to them that dwell on earth, is *confirmation* to them that dwell in heaven. Before the efficacy of this blood, guilt vanishes, and shrinks away as the shadow before the glorious sun. Every drop of it hath a voice, and speaks to the soul that sits trembling under its guilt better things than the blood of Abel, Heb. xii. 24. It sprinkles us from all evil, i. e. an unquiet and accusing conscience, Heb. x. 22. For having enough in it to satisfy God, it must needs have enough in it to satisfy conscience.

Conscience can demand no more for its satisfaction, nor will it take less than God demands for his satisfaction. And in this blood is enough to give both satisfaction.

Digitized by Google

Secondly, As there is ſufficient efficacy in this blood to expiate the greateſt guilt; ſo it is as manifeſt, that the virtue and efficacy of it, is intended and deſigned by God for the uſe of believing ſinners. Such blood as this was ſhed, without doubt, for ſome weighty end, that ſome might be the better for it. Who they are for whom it is intended, is plain enough from Acts xiii. 39. "And by him all that believe, are juſtified from all things, from "which they could not be juſtified by the law of Moſes,"

That the remiſſion of the ſins of believers was the great thing deſigned in the pouring out of this precious blood of Chriſt, appears from all the ſacrifices that figured it to the ancient church. The ſhedding of that typical blood, ſpake a deſign of pardon. And the putting of their hands upon the head of the ſacrifice, ſpake the way and method of believing, by which that blood was then applied to them in that way; and is ſtill applied to us in a more excellent way. Had no pardon being intended, no ſacrifices had been appointed.

Moreover, let it be conſidered, this blood of the croſs is the blood of a ſurety; that came under the ſame obligations with us, and in our name or ſtead ſhed it: and ſo of courſe frees and diſcharges the principal offender, or debtor, Heb. vii. 22. Can God exact ſatisfaction from the blood and death of his own Son, the ſurety of believers, and yet ſtill demand it from believers? It cannot be. "Who (ſaith the apoſtle) ſhall lay any thing to the "charge of God's elect? It is God that juſtifieth. Who ſhall "condemn? It is Chriſt that died," Rom. viii. 33, 34. And why are faith and repentance preſcribed as the *means* of pardon? Why doth God every where in his word, call upon ſinners to repent, and believe in this blood? encouraging them ſo to do, by ſo many precious promiſes of remiſſion; and declaring the inevitable and eternal ruin of all impenitent, and unbelieving ones, who deſpiſe and reject this blood? What, I ſay, doth all this ſpeak, but the poſſibility of a pardon for the greateſt of ſinners; and the certainty of a free, full, and final pardon for all believing ſinners? O what a joyful ſound is this! What raviſhing voices of peace, pardon, grace, and acceptance, come to our ears from the blood of the croſs?

The greateſt guilt that ever was contracted upon a trembling, ſhaking conſcience, can ſtand before the efficacy of the blood of Chriſt no more, than the ſinner himſelf can ſtand before the juſtice of the Lord, with all that guilt upon him.

Reader, the word aſſures thee, whatever thou haſt been, or art, that ſins of as deep a dye as thine, have been waſhed away in this blood. "I was a blaſphemer, a perſecutor, injurious; but "I obtained mercy," ſaith Paul, 1 Tim. i. 13. But it may be

Digitized by Google

thou wilt object; this was a rare and singular instance, and it is a great question whether any other sinner shall find the like grace that he did. No question of it at all, if you believe in Christ, as he did; for he tells us, ver. 16. "For this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first, Jesus Christ might shew forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting." So that upon the same grounds he obtained mercy, you may obtain it also.

Those very men who had a hand in the shedding of Christ's blood, had the benefit of that blood afterwards pardoning them, Acts ii. 36. There is nothing but unbelief and impenitency of heart can bar thy soul from the blessings of this blood.

Inf. 2. Did Christ die the cursed death of the cross for believers, *then though there be much of pain, there is nothing of curse in the death of the saints.* It still wears its dart, by which it strikes; but hath lost its sting, by which it hurts and destroys. A serpent that hath no sting, may hiss and affright, but we may take him in our hand, without danger. Death poured out all its poison, and lost its sting in Christ's side, when he became a curse for us.

But what speak I of the innocency and harmlessness of death to believers? It is certainly their friend, and great benefactor. As there is no curse, so there are many blessings in it. "Death is "yours," 1 Cor. iii. 22. Yours as a special privilege and favour. Christ hath not only conquered it, but is more than a conqueror; for he hath made it beneficial, and very serviceable to the saints. When Christ was nailed to the tree, then he said as it were to death, which came to grapple with him there, "O death, I will "be thy plague; O grave, I will be thy destruction:" and so he was; for he swallowed up death in victory, spoiled it of its power. So that, though it may now affright some weak believers, yet cannot hurt them at all.

Inf. 3. If Christ died the cursed death of the cross for us, *how cheerfully should we submit to, and bear any cross for Jesus Christ?* He had his cross, and we have ours*; but what feathers are ours compared with his? His cross was a heavy cross indeed, yet how patiently and meekly did he support it! "he endured his cross," we cannot endure or bear ours, though they be not to be named with his. Three things would marvelously strengthen us to bear the cross of Christ, and bring up a good report upon it in the world.

First, That we shall carry it but a little way. *Secondly*, Christ bears the heaviest end of it. *Thirdly*, Innumerable blessings and mercies grow upon the cross of Christ.

* *Omnis Christianus est crucianus, i. e.* Every Christian is a cross-bearer.

Digitized by Google

First, We shall bear it but a little way. It should be enough to me (saith * a holy one) that Christ will have joy and sorrow halfers of the life of the saints. And that each of them should have a share of our days, as the night and day are kindly partners of time, and take it up betwixt them. But if sorrow be the greediest halfer of our days here, I know joy's day shall dawn, and do more than recompense all our sad hours.

Let my Lord Jesus (since he will do so) weave my bit-and-span length of time with white and black; well and woe.—Let the rose be neighbour with the thorn.—"When we are over the water, "Christ shall cry, down crosses, and up heaven for evermore; "down hell, and down death, and down sin, and down sorrow; "and up glory, up life, up joy for evermore. It is true, Christ "and his cross are not separable in this life; howbeit Christ and "his cross part at heaven's door: for there is no house-room for "crosses in heaven. One tear, one sigh, one sad heart, one fear, "one loss, one thought of trouble cannot find lodging there."—Sorrow and the saints are not married together; or suppose it was so, heaven shall make a divorce. Life is but short, and therefore crosses cannot be long. Our sufferings are but for a while, 1 Pet. v. 10. They are but the sufferings of the present time, Rom. viii. 18.

Secondly, As we shall carry the cross of Christ but a little way, so Christ himself bears the heaviest end of it. And as one happily expresses, he saith of their crosses, *half mine*. He divideth sufferings with them, and takes the largest share to himself.—"O how sweet a sight (saith one sweetly) is it to see a cross be-"twixt Christ and us. To hear our Redeemer say, at every sigh, "at every blow, and every loss of a believer, *half mine*. For they "are called the sufferings of Christ, and the reproach of Christ, "Col. ii. 24. Heb. xi. 26. As when two are partners or owners "of a ship, half of the gain, and half of the loss, belongeth to "either of the two. So Christ in our sufferings, is half gainer, "and half loser, with us: yea, the heaviest end of the black tree "lieth on your Lord. It falleth first upon him, and but rebounds "from him upon you:" "The reproaches of them that reproach-"ed thee, are fallen upon me," Psal. lxiv. 9. Nay, to speak as the thing is, Christ doth not only bear half, or the better part, but the whole of our cross and burden. Yea, he bears all, and more than all; for he bears us and our burden too, or else we would quickly sink, and faint under it.

* If twenty crosses be written for you in God's book, they will come at last to nineteen, and after that to nothing. Put your head betwixt Christ's breasts for evermore, and his own soft hand shall dry your face, and wipe away your tears.

Digitized by Google

Thirdly, As we have not fat to carry it, and Chriſt carries the heavieſt part; yea, all the burden for us; yea, us and our burden too; ſo, in the laſt place, it is reviving to think what an innumerable multitude of bleſſings and mercies are the fruit and offspring of a ſanctified croſs. Since that tree was ſo richly watered with the blood of Chriſt; what ſtore of choice, and rich fruits doth it bear to believers?

Our ſufferings (ſaith one) are waſhed in the blood of Chriſt, as well as our ſouls. "For Chriſt's merits bought a bleſſing to the "croſſes of the Sons of God. Our troubles owe us a free paſſage "through him. Devils, and men, and croſſes, are our debtors; "and death, and all ſtorms are our debtors, to blow our poor "toſſed bark over the water freight-free: and to ſet the travellers "in their own known ground. Therefore we ſhall die, and yet "live.—I know no man hath a velvet croſs, but the croſs is made "of what God will have it; but verily, howbeit, it be no warrantable market to buy a croſs, yet I dare not ſay, O that I had "liberty to ſell Chriſt's croſs, left therewith alſo I ſhould ſell joy, "comfort, ſenſe of love, patience, and the kind viſits of a bridegroom.—I have but ſmall experience of ſufferings for Chriſt, but "let my Judge and witneſs in heaven, lay my ſoul in the balance "of juſtice; if I find not a young heaven, and a little paradiſe of "glorious comforts, and ſoul-delighting love-kiſſes of Chriſt, in "ſuffering for him and his truth.—My priſon is my palace, my "ſorrow is with child of joy; my loſſes are rich loſſes, my pain "eaſy pain, my heavy days are holy days and happy days. I may "tell a new tale of Chriſt to my friends.—O what owe I to the "file, and to the hammer, and to the furnace of my Lord Jeſus! "who hath now let me ſee how good the wheat of Chriſt is, that "goes through his mill, and his oven, to be made bread for his "own table. Grace tried is better than grace, and more than "grace. It is glory in its infancy.

"Who knows the truth of grace without a trial.—O how little "getteth Chriſt of us, but what he winneth (to ſpeak ſo) with "much toil and pains? And how ſoon would faith freeze without "a croſs? Bear your croſs therefore with joy."

Inf. 4. Did Chriſt die the death, yea, the worſt of deaths for us? Then it follows, that *our mercies are brought forth with great difficulty; and that which is ſweet to us in the fruition, was coſtly, and hard to Chriſt in the acquiſition.* Surely, upon every mercy we have this motto written, *The price of blood*, Col. i. 14. "In whom "we have redemption through his blood:" Upon which a late neat * writer delivers himſelf thus. "The way of grace is here

* Locker on Col.

Digitized by Google

" conſiderable; life comes through death; God comes in Chriſt;
" and Chriſt comes in blood: the choiceſt mercies come through
" the greateſt miſeries; prime favours come ſwimming in blood to
" us. Through a red ſea Iſrael came to Canaan. Many a man
" loſt his life, and much blood ſhed; the very land flowing with
" milk and honey was firſt made to flow with blood, 'ere Iſrael
" could inherit the promiſe. Seven nations were deſtroyed, 'ere
" the land of Canaan was divided to the Iſraelites, Acts xiii. 19.—
" Sin makes mercy ſo deadly hard to bring forth. To chriſten
" every precious child, every *Benjamin*, *Benoni*, every ſon of
" God's right-hand, a ſon of ſorrow and death to her that brings
" him forth. Adam's ſweets had no bitter till he tranſgreſſed
" God's will: one mercy did not die to bring forth another, till
" he died. But oh! how ſhould this raiſe the value of our mer-
" cies? What, the price of blood, the price of precious blood,
" the blood of the croſs! O what an eſteem ſhould this raiſe!

" Things (as the ſame ingenious author adds) are prized rather
" as they come, than as they are. Far fetched and dear bought
" makes all the price, and gives all the worth with us weak crea-
" tures. Upon this ground the ſcripture, when it ſpeaks of our
" great fortune, tells the great price it coſt, as eying our weak-
" neſs, who look more at what things coſt, than at what they
" are. And as knowing if any thing will take with us, this will,
" *To him that loved us, and waſhed us from our ſins in his own blood*,
" Rev. i, 5.

" Man is a legal creature, and looks much at what is given for
" a thing. What did this coſt? Why, it coſt Chriſt's own
" blood. Colour is more than the cloth with us, and ſcarlet colour
" is a general taking colour with us; and therefore is Chriſt's gar-
" ment dipped in blood, and he admired in this habit. *Who is*
" *this that cometh from Edom, with garments dyed red from Bozra?*"

Beware then you abuſe not any of the mercies that Chriſt brought forth with ſo many bitter pangs and throws. And let all this endear Chriſt more than ever to you, and make you in a deep ſenſe of his grace and love, to ſay,

Thanks be to God for Jeſus Chriſt.

Digitized by Google

SERMON XXVII.

Of the signal Providence, which directed and ordered the Title affixed to the cross of CHRIST.

LUKE xxiii. 38.

And a Superscription also was written over him in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew; This is the King of the Jews.

BEFORE I pass on to the Manner of Christ's death, I shall consider the title affixed to the cross; in which very much of the wisdom of Providence was discovered. It was the manner of the Romans, that the equity of their proceedings might the more clearly appear to the people, when they crucified any man, to publish the cause of his death, in a table written in capital letters, and placed over the head of the crucified. And that there might be at least, a shew and face of justice in Christ's death, he also shall have his title or superscription.

The worst and most unrighteous actions labour to cover and shroud themselves under pretension of equity. Sin is so shameful a thing, that it cares not to own its name. Christ shall have a table written for him also. This writing one evangelist calls the *accusation*, αιτια, Matth. xxvii. 37. Another calls it the *Title*, τιτλος, John xix. 19. Another the *Inscription* or *Superscription*, επιγραφη, so the text. And another the *Superscription of his Accusation*, επιγραφη της αιτιας, Mark xv. 26. In short, it was a fair legible writing, intended to express the fact or crime, for which the person died.

This was their usual manner, though sometimes we find it was published by the voice of the common cryer. As in the case of * Attalus the martyr, who was led about the amphitheatre, one proclaiming before him, *This is Attalus the Christian.* But it was customary and usual to express the crime in a written table, as the text expresses it. Wherein these three things offer themselves to your consideration.

First, The character or description of Christ, contained in that writing. And he is described by his kingly dignity: † *This is the King of the Jews.* The very office, which but a little before, they had reproached and derided, bowing the knee to him in mockery, saying, *Hail King of the Jews:* the Providence of God so orders it, that therein he shall be vindicated and honoured. *This*

* Euseb. Eccles. Hist. lib. 5. c. 1.

† The full title was, *This is Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews.* Par.

Digitized by Google

is the King of the Jews: Or, as the other evangelists complete it, *This is Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews.*

Secondly, The person that drew his character or title. It was Pilate; he that but now condemned him: he that was his *judge,* shall be his *herald,* to proclaim his glory. For the title is honourable. Surely, this was not from himself, for he was Christ's enemy; but rather than Christ should want a tongue to clear him, the tongue of an enemy shall do it.

Thirdly, The time when this honour was done him: It was when he was at the lowest ebb of his glory; when shame and reproach were heaped on him by all hands. When all the disciples had forsaken him, and were fled. Not one left to proclaim his innocency, or speak a word in his vindication. Then doth the providence of God as strangely, as powerfully, over-rule the heart and pen of Pilate*, to draw this title for him, and affix it to his cross. Surely we must look higher than Pilate in this thing, and see how Providence serves itself by the hands of Christ's adversaries. Pilate writes in honour of Christ, and stiffly defends it too. Hence our observation is,

Doct. 1. *That the dignity of Christ was openly proclaimed, and defended by an enemy; and that, in the time of his greatest reproaches and sufferings.*

To open this mystery of providence to you, that you may not stand idly gazing upon Christ's title, as many then did; we must, *First,* Consider the nature and quality of this title. *Secondly,* What hand the Providence of God had in this matter. *Thirdly,* And then draw forth the proper uses and improvements of it.

First, To open the nature and quality of Christ's title or inscription; let it be thoroughly considered, and we shall find,

First, That it was an *extraordinary* title, varying from all examples of that kind; and directly crossing the main design and end of their own custom. For, as I hinted before, the end of it was to clear the equity of their proceedings, and shew the people how justly they suffered those punishments inflicted on them for such crimes. But lo, here is a title expressing no crime at all, and so vindicating Christ's innocency†. This some of them perceived, and moved Pilate to change it, not, This *is,* but, This is he that said, *I am the King of the Jews.* In that, as they conceived,

* Perhaps the title was written according to custom, but our thoughts must rise higher, even to the purpose of God, who would, by the writing of Pilate, have Christ publicly proclaimed King of the church. *Par.*

† This was very remarkable, that a title was affixed which imported no ignominy. *Calvin.*

Digitized by Google

lay his crime. O how ſtrange and wonderful a thing was this! But what ſhall we ſay! it was a day of wonders and extraordinary things. As there was never ſuch a perſon crucified before, ſo there was never ſuch a title affixed to the croſs before.

Secondly, As it was an extraordinary, ſo it was a public title, both written and publiſhed with the greateſt advantage of ſpreading itſelf far and near, among all people, that could be, "for it was writ-"ten in three languages*, and to thoſe moſt known in the world "at that time." The Greek tongue was then known in moſt parts of the world. The Hebrew was the Jews native language. And the Latin the language of the Romans. So that it being written both in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, it was eaſy to be underſtood both by Jews and Gentiles.

And indeed, unto this the providence of God had a ſpecial eye, to make it notorious and evident to all the world; for even ſo all things deſigned for public view, and knowledge were written. Joſephus tells us of certain pillars, on which was engraven in letters of Greek, and Latin, "It is a wickedneſs for ſtrangers to enter into "the holy place†." So the ſoldiers of Gordian, the third emperor, when he was ſlain upon the borders of Perſia, raiſed a monument for him, and engraved his memorial upon it, in Greek, Latin, Perſic, Judaic, and Egyptiac letters, that all people might read the ſame. And as it was written in three learned languages, ſo it was expoſed to view in a public place; and at that time, when multitudes of ſtrangers, as well as Jews, were at Jeruſalem; it was at the time of the paſſover; ſo that all things concurred to ſpread and divulge the innocency of Chriſt, vindicated in this title.

Thirdly, As it was a public, ſo it was an honourable title. Such was the nature of it, ſaith ‡ Bucer; that in the midſt of death, Chriſt began to triumph by it. And by reaſon thereof, the croſs began to change its own nature, and inſtead of a rack, or engine of torture, it became a throne of majeſty. Yea, it might be called now, as the church itſelf is, *The pillar and ground of truth*; for it held out much of the goſpel, much of the glory of Chriſt; as that pillar doth, to which a royal proclamation is affixed.

Fourthly, It was a *vindicating* title: it cleared up the honour, dignity, and innocency of Chriſt, againſt all the falſe imputations, calumnies, and blaſphemies, which were caſt upon him before, by the wicked tongues, both of Jews and Gentiles.

They had called him a deceiver, an uſurper, a blaſphemer; they rent their clothes, in token of their deteſtation of his blaſphemy;

* *Tribus linguis tunc orbe vulgatiſſimis, ſcribi voluit; ut ab omnibus legi, et intelligi poſſet.* Pareus.

† *In locum ſanctum ingredi alienigenis nefas eſt.*

‡ *Bucer in loc.*

Digitized by Google

becauſe he made himſelf the Son of God, and King of Iſrael. But now in this, they acknowledged him to be both Lord and Saviour. Not a mock king, as they had made him before. So that herein the honour of Chriſt was fully vindicated.

Fifthly, Moreover it was a *predicting* and *preſaging* title*. Evidently foreſhewing the propagation of Chriſt's kingdom, and the ſpreading of his name and glory among all kindreds, nations, tongues, and languages. As Chriſt hath right to enter into all the kingdoms of the earth, by his goſpel, and ſet up his throne in every nation: ſo it was preſaged by this title that he ſhould do ſo. And that both Hebrews, Greeks, and Latins ſhould be called to the knowledge of him. Nor is it a wonder, that this ſhould be predicted by wicked Pilate, when Caiaphas himſelf, a man every way as wicked as he, had propheſied to the ſame purpoſe, John xi. 51, 52. For being High-prieſt that year, he propheſied, That *Jeſus ſhould die for that nation, and not for that nation only, but that alſo he ſhould gather together in one, the children of God that were ſcattered abroad.* Yea, many have propheſied in Chriſt's name, who, for all that, ſhall never be owned by him, Matth. vii. 22.

Sixthly, And laſtly, It was an immutable title. The Jews endeavoured, but could not perſuade Pilate to alter it. To all their importunities he returns this reſolute anſwer, "What I have writ-"ten, I have written;" as if he ſhould ſay, Urge me no more, I have written his title, I cannot, I will not, alter a letter, a point thereof. "Surely the conſtancy of Pilate at this time can be at-"tributed to nothing but divine ſpecial Providence†." Moſt wonderful! that he, who before was as unconſtant as a reed ſhaken by the wind, is now as fixed as a pillar of braſs.

And yet more wonderful, that he ſhould write down that very particular in the title of Chriſt, *This is the King of the Jews*, which was the very thing that ſo ſcared him but a little before, and was the very conſideration that moved him to give ſentence. What was now become of the fear of Cæſar? that Pilate dares to be Chriſt's herald, and publicly to proclaim him, *The King of the Jews*. This was the title.

Secondly, We ſhall next enquire what hand the Divine Providence had in this buſineſs.

And indeed, the providence of God in this hour, acted gloriouſly, and wonderfully, theſe five ways.

Firſt, In over-ruling the heart and hand of Pilate in the draught and ſtile of it, and that contrary to his own inclination. I doubt

* He would have it written in three languages, that this might be a preſage of the future calling, not only of all the Hebrews, but alſo of all the Gentiles to the kingdom of Chriſt. *Par.*

† *Hæc Pilati conſtantia divinæ providentiæ tribuenda eſt.* Calvin.

Digitized by Google

not but Pilate himself was ignorant of, and far enough from designing that which the wisdom of providence aimed at in this matter*. He was a wicked man, and had no love to Christ. He had given sentence of death against him; yet this is he that proclaimed him to be *Jesus, King of the Jews.* It so over-ruled his pen, that he could not write what was in his own heart and intention, but the quite contrary; even a fair and public testimony of the kingly office of the Son of God, *This is the King of the Jews.*

Secondly, Herein the wisdom of Providence was gloriously displayed, in applying a present, proper, public remedy to the reproaches and blasphemies which Christ had then newly received in his name and honour. The superstitious Jews wound him, and Heathen Pilate prepares a plaister to heal him: they reproach, he vindicates; they throw the dirt, he washes it off. Oh the profound and inscrutable wisdom of Providence!

Thirdly, Moreover, Providence eminently appeared at this time in keeping so timorous a person, a man of so base a spirit, that would not stick at any thing to please the people, from receding, or giving ground in the least to their importunities. Is Pilate become a man of such resolution and constancy? whence is this? but from the God of the spirits of all flesh, who now flowed in so powerfully upon his spirit, that he could not chuse but write; and when he had written, had no more power to alter what he had written, than he had to refuse to write it.

Fourthly, Herein also much of the wisdom of Providence appeared, in casting the ignominy of the death of Christ upon those very men who ought to bear it. Pilate was moved by divine instinct, at once to clear Christ, and accuse them. For it is as if he had said, you have moved me to crucify your king, I have crucified him, and now let the ignominy of his death rest upon your heads, who have extorted this from me. He is righteous, the crime is not his but yours.

Fifthly, And lastly, The providence of God wonderfully discovered itself (as before was noted) in fixing this title to the cross of Christ, when there was so great a confluence of all sorts of people to take notice of it. So that it could never have been more advantageously published, than it was at this time. So that we may say, How wonderful are the works of God! "His ways are in the "sea, his paths in the great deeps; his footsteps are not known:" His providence hath a prospect beyond the understandings of all creatures.

* The Divine Providence which over-ruled the pen of Pilate, had far higher views. *Calvin.*

Digitized by Google

Inference 1. Hence it follows, *That the providence of our God can, and often doth over-rule the counsels and actions of the worst of men to his own glory.*

It can serve itself by them that oppose it, and bring about the glory and honour of Christ, by those very men, and means, which are designed to lay it in the dust. "Surely the wrath of man shall "praise thee," Psal. lxxvi. 10. The Jews thought when they crowned Christ with thorns, bowed the knee, and mocked him, led him to Golgotha and crucified him; that now they had utterly despoiled him of all his kingly dignities; and yet even there he is proclaimed a king. Thus the dispersion of the Jews, upon the death of Stephen, spread the gospel far and near, "For they went "every where preaching the word," Acts viii. 4. Thus Paul's bonds for the gospel fell out to the furtherance of the gospel, Phil. i. 12. O the depth of Divine Wisdom! to propagate and establish the interest of Jesus Christ, by those very means that seem to import its destruction: that extracts a medicine out of poison! How great a support should this be to the faith of God's people! When all things seem to run cross to their hopes and happiness! "Let "Israel therefore hope in the Lord, for with the Lord there is "mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption," Psal. cxxx. 7. i. e. He is never at a loss for means to promote and serve his own ends.

Inf. 2. Hence likewise it follows, *That the greatest services performed to Christ accidentally and undesignedly, shall never be accepted nor rewarded of God.* Pilate did Christ an eminent piece of service. He did that for Christ that not one of his own disciples at that time durst do; and yet this service was not accepted of God, because he did it not designedly for his glory, but from the mere overrulings of Providence.

If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted, according to what a man hath, saith the apostle, 2 Cor. viii. 12. The eye of God is first and mainly upon the will; if that be sincere and right for God, small things will be accepted; and if not, the greatest shall be abhorred. So 1 Cor. ix. 17. If I do this thing (i. e. preach the gospel) willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, a dispensation is committed to me, *q. d.* If I upon pure principles of faith and love, from my heart, designing the glory of God, and delighting to promote it by my ministry, do cheerfully and willingly apply myself to the preaching of the gospel, I shall have acceptance and reward with God; but if my work be a burden to me, and the service of God esteemed as a bondage, why then providence may use me for the dispensing of the gospel to others, but I myself shall lose both reward and comfort. As it doth not excuse my sin, that God can bring glory to himself out of it; so

Digitized by Google

neither doth it justify an action that God hath praise and honour accidentally by it. Paul knew that even the strife and envy in which some preached Christ, should turn to his salvation; and yet he was not at all beholden to them for promoting his salvation that way. So Pilate here promotes the honour of Jesus Christ to whom he had no love, and whose glory he did not at all design in this thing; and therefore hath neither acceptance nor reward with God.

O therefore, whatever you do for Christ, do it heartily, designedly, for his glory; of a ready and willing mind; with pure and sincere aims at his glory; for this is that the Lord more respects, than the greatest services by accident.

Inf. 3. Would not Pilate recede from what he had written on Christ's behalf? *How shameful a thing is it for Christians to retract what they have said or done on Christ's behalf?* When Pilate had asserted him to be king of the Jews, he maintained his assertion, and all the importunity of Christ's enemies shall not move him an hair's breadth from it. "What I have written, I have "written," *q. d.* I have said it, and I will not revoke it. Did Pilate say, "What I have written, I have written:" and shall not we say, What we have believed, we have believed: and what we have professed, we have professed? What we have engaged to Christ, we have engaged. We will stand to what we have done for him: we will never recant our former ownings of and appearances for Christ.

As God's election, so your profession must be irrevocable. O let him that is holy be holy still. That counsel given by a reverend divine in this case, is both safe and good. "Be sure (saith he) "you stand on good ground, and then resolve to stand your "ground against all the world. Follow God, and fear not men. "Art thou godly! repent not whatsoever thy religion cost thee. Let "sinners repent, but let not saints repent. Let saints repent of "their faults, but not of their faith: of their iniquities, but not "of their righteousness. Repent not of your righteousness, lest "you afterward repent of your repentance.—Repent not of your "zeal, or your forwardness, or activity in the holy ways of the "Lord.—Wish not yourselves a step farther back, or a cubit "lower in your stature, in the grace of God. Wish not any "thing undone, concerning which God will say, Well done."

In Galen's time it was a proverbial expression, when any one would shew the impossibility of a thing; you may as soon turn a Christian from Christ as do it.

A true heart-choice of Christ is without reserves, and what is without reserves, will be without repentance. There is a stiffness and stoutness of spirit which is our sin. But this is our glory, in

Digitized by Google

the matters of God, saith Luther, I assume this title, *Cedo nulli*, "I yield to none:" If ye be hot and cold, off and on; profess, and retract your profession. He that condemned Christ with his lips, will condemn you by his example. Resolute Pilate shall be your judge.

Inf. 4. Did Pilate affix such an honourable, vindicating title to the cross? *Then the cross of Christ is a dignified cross.* Then the cross and sufferings of Christ are attended with glory and honour. Remember when your hearts begin to startle at the sufferings and reproaches of Christ, there is an honourable title upon the cross of Christ. And as it was upon his, so it will be upon your cross also, if ye suffer for Christ. Moses saw it, which made him esteem the very reproaches of Christ, above all the treasures of Egypt, Heb. xi. 26. How did the martyrs glory in their sufferings for Christ! calling their chains of iron, chains of gold; and their manacles, bracelets?

I remember it is storied of * Ludovicus Marsacus, a knight of France, that when he, with divers other Christians of an inferior rank and degree in the world, were condemned to die for religion, and the gaoler had bound them with chains, but did not bind him, being a more honourable person than the rest: he was offended greatly by that omission, and said, "Why do not you honour me "with a chain for Christ also, and create me a knight of that il- "lustrious order?"

"To you (saith the apostle) it is given in the behalf of Christ, "not only to believe, but also to suffer for his sake," Phil. i. 29. There is a two-fold honour attending the cross of Christ; one in the very suffering themselves; another, as the reward and fruit of them. To be called out to suffer for Christ, is a great honour. Yea, an honour peculiar to the saints. The damned suffer from Christ, the wicked suffer for their sins. The angels glorify Christ by their active, but not by their passive obedience. This is reserved as a special honour for saints.

And as there is a great deal of honour in being called forth to suffer on Christ's account; so Christ will confer special honour upon his suffering saints, in the day of their reward, Mat. x. 32. "He that confesses me before men, him will I confess also before "my Father which is in heaven." O Sirs, one of these days the Lord will break out of heaven, with a shout, accompanied with myriads of angels, and ten thousands of his saints, those glittering courtiers of heaven. The heavens and earth shall flame and melt before him; and it shall be very tempestuous round about him;

* *Cur me non quoque torque donas, et illustris illius ordinis militem non creas?* Thuan. Hist.

Digitized by Google

the graves shall open, the sea and earth shall yield up their dead. You shall see him ascending the awful throne of judgment, and all flesh gathered before his face; even multitudes, multitudes that no man can number. And then to be brought forth by Christ before that great assembly of angels and saints: and there to have an honourable mention and remembrance made of your labours, and sufferings, your pains, patience, and self-denial, of all your sufferings, and losses for Christ; and to hear from his mouth, *Well done, good and faithful servant:* O what honour is this! Yet this shall be done to the man that now chuses sufferings for Christ, rather than sin; *That esteems his reproaches greater riches than the treasures of Egypt.*

I tell you, It is an honour the angels have not. I make no doubt; but they would be glad, (had they bodies of flesh as we have), to lay their necks on the block for Christ. But this is the saints peculiar privilege. The apostles *went away from the council rejoicing, that they were honoured to be dishonoured for Christ:* Or, as we translate it*, "counted worthy to suffer shame for him," Acts v. 41. Surely, if there be any *stigmata laudis*, "marks of honour," they are such as we receive for Christ's sake. if there be any shame that hath glory in it, it is the reproach of Christ, and the shame you suffer for his name.

Inf. 5. Did Pilate so stiffly assert and defend the honour of Christ? *What doubt can then be made of the success of Christ's interest, and the prosperity of his cause; when the very enemies thereof are made to serve it?*

Rather than Christ shall want honour, Pilate the man that condemned him, shall do him honour. And as it fared with his person, just so with his interest also. How often have the people of God received mercies from the hands of their enemies? Rev. xii. 16. "The earth helped the woman," i. e. wicked men did the church service. So that this may singularly relieve us against all our despondencies and fears of the miscarriage of the interest of Christ.

That people can never be ruined, who thrive by their losses; conquer by being conquered; multiply by being diminished: Whose worst enemies are made to do that for them, which friends cannot or dare not do. See you a Heathen Pilate proclaiming the honour and innocency of Christ; God will not want instruments to honour Christ by. If others cannot, his very enemies shall.

Inf. 6. Did Pilate vindicate Christ in drawing up such a title to be affixed to his cross? then hence it follows, *That God will, sooner or later, clear up the innocency and integrity of his people, who*

* Ὅτι ὑπὲρ τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ κατηξιώθησαν ἀτιμασθῆναι.

Digitized by Google

commit their cauſe to him. Chriſt's name was clouded with many reproaches; wounded through and through, by the blaſphemous tongues of his malicious enemies. He committed himſelf to him that judgeth righteouſly, 1 Pet. ii. 23. and ſee how ſoon God vindicates him. That is ſweet and ſeaſonable counſel for us, when our names are clouded with unjuſt cenſures, Pſal. xxxvii. 5, 6. "Commit thy way unto the Lord; truſt alſo in him, and he ſhall "bring it to paſs. He ſhall bring forth thy righteouſneſs as the "light, and thy judgment as the noon day." Joſeph was accuſed of incontinency; David of treaſon; Daniel of diſobedience; Elijah of troubling Iſrael; Jeremiah of revolting; Amos of preaching againſt the king; the Apoſtles of ſedition, rebellion, and alteration of laws; Chriſt himſelf of gluttony, ſorcery, blaſphemy, ſedition; but how did all theſe honourable names wade out of their reproaches, as the ſun out of a cloud! God cleared up their honour for them even in this world. "Slanders (ſaith one) are but as "ſoap, which though it ſoils and daubs for the preſent, yet it "helps to make the garment more clean and ſhining." "When "hair is ſhaven, it comes the thicker, and with a new increaſe; "ſo when the razor of cenſure hath (ſaith * one) made your heads "bare, and brought on the baldneſs of reproach, be not diſcou-"raged, God hath a time to bring forth your righteouſneſs as the "light, by an apparent conviction, to dazzle and diſcourage your "adverſaries."

The world was well changed, when Conſtantine kiſſed the hollow of Paphnutius's eye, which was ere while put out for Chriſt. Scorn and reproach is but a little cloud, that is ſoon blown over. But ſuppoſe ye ſhould not be vindicated in this world, but die under a cloud upon your names; be ſure God will clear it up, and that to purpoſe in that great day. Then ſhall the righteous, (even in this reſpect) ſhine forth as the ſun, in the kingdom of their Father. Then every detracting mouth ſhall be ſtopped, and no more cruel arrows of reproach ſhot at the white of your reputation.

Be patient therefore, my brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. "The Lord cometh with ten thouſands of his ſaints, to execute "judgment upon all; aud to convince all that are ungodly, of all "their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodly committed. And "of all their hard ſpeeches which ungodly ſinners have ſpoken "againſt him," Jude 14, 15. Then ſhall they retract their cenſures, and alter their opinions of the ſaints. If Chriſt will be our compurgator, we need not fear who are our accuſers. If your names, for his ſake, be caſt out as evil, and ſpurned in the dirt;

* Manton on James, p. 227.

Digitized by Google

Christ will deliver it you again in that day whiter than the snow in Salmon.

Inf. 7. Did Pilate give this title to cast the reproach of his death upon the Jews, and clear himself of it? *How natural is it to men to transfer the fault of their own actions from themselves to others?* For when he writes, *This is the King of the Jews*, he wholly charges them with the crime of crucifying their king*: and it is as if he had said, Hereafter let the blame and fault of this action lie wholly upon your heads, who have brought the guilt of his blood upon yourselves and children.

I am clear, you have extorted it from me. O where shall we find a spirit so ingenuous, to take home to itself the shame of its own actions, and charge itself freely with its own guilt†? Indeed it is the property of renewed, gracious hearts to remember, confess, and freely bewail their own evils, to the glory of God: and that is a gracious heart indeed, which in this case judgeth, that the glory, which by confession, goeth to the name of his God, is not so much glory lost to his own name, but it is the power of grace moulding our proud natures into another thing, that must bring them to his.

SERMON XXVIII.

Of the Manner of CHRIST's Death, in respect to the Solitariness thereof.

ZECH. xiii. 7.

Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts; smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered; and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones.

IN the former sermons, we have opened the nature and kind of death Christ died; even the cursed death of the cross. Wherein, nevertheless his innocency was vindicated, by that honourable title providentially affixed to his cross. Method now requires that we take into consideration the manner in which he endured the cross, and that was *solitarily*, *meekly*, and *instructively*.

---

* Because you desired that I should crucify your king, I have crucified him; the ignominy shall henceforth be yours, who extorted this from me. *Calv. on Matth.* xxvii. 27.

† For saints, when their hearts are renewed, are not ashamed, by repentance, to acknowledge their ignominious faults and ignominy, to the glory of God: nothing is lost to us, which redounds to his honour. *Brightman on Cant.*

Digitized by Google

His ſolitude in ſuffering is plainly expreſſed in this ſcripture now before us, it cannot be doubted, but the prophet in this place ſpeaks of Chriſt, if you conſider Mat. xxvi. 31. where you ſhall find theſe words applied to Chriſt by his own accomodation of them. "Then "ſaid Jeſus unto them, all ye ſhall be offended becauſe of me this "night, for it is written, I will ſmite the ſhepherd, and the ſheep "ſhall be ſcattered." Beſides, the title here given [God's fellow] is too big for any creature in heaven or earth beſides Chriſt.

In theſe words we have four things particularly to conſider. *Firſt*, The commiſſion given to the ſword by the Lord of hoſts. *Secondly*, The perſon againſt whom it is commiſſioned. *Thirdly*, The diſmal effect of that ſtroke. *Fourthly*, and *laſtly*, The gracious mitigation of it.

Firſt, The commiſſion given to the ſword by the Lord of hoſts. "Awake, O ſword and ſmite, ſaith the Lord of hoſts." The Lord of hoſts, at whoſe beck and command all the creatures are. Who, with a word of his mouth, can open all the armories in the world, and command what weapons and inſtruments of death he pleaſeth, calls here for the ſword; not the rod, gently to chaſten; but the ſword to deſtroy. The rod breaks no bones, but the ſword opens the door to death and deſtruction. The ſtrokes and thruſts of the ſword are mortal; and he bids it awake. It ſignifies both "to rouze up," as one that awakes out of ſleep, and "to "rouze or awake with triumph and rejoicing." So the ſame word is rendered, Job xxxi. 29. Yea, he commands it, "to awake "and ſmite*." And it is as if the Lord had ſaid, Come forth of thy ſcabbard, O ſword of juſtice, thou haſt been hid there a long time, and haſt, as it were, been aſleep in thy ſcabbard, now awake and glitter, thou ſhalt drink royal blood, ſuch as thou never ſheddeſt before.

Secondly, The perſon againſt whom it is commiſſioned, "my "ſhepherd, and the man that is my fellow†." This ſhepherd can be no other than Chriſt, who is often in ſcripture ſtiled "a Shepherd, yea, the chief Shepherd, the Prince of paſtors." Who redeemed, feeds, guides, and preſerves the flock of God's elect, 1 Pet. v. 4. John x. 11. This is he whom he alſo ſtiles *the man his fellow*‡. Or his neighbour, as ſome render it. And ſo Chriſt is, with reſpect to his equality and unity with the Father, both in eſſence and will. His next neighbour. His other ſelf. You have the ſenſe of it in Phil. ii. 6. He was in the form of God, and thought it no robbery to be equal with God.

---

* עוֹר—*Evigilavit, ſuſcitavit.* Buxtorf. *Incitavit ad agendum.* Stockius.

† *Paſtorem vocat Chriſtum,* ἀρχιποίμενα, *animarum noſtrarum.* D. Par.

‡ גֶּבֶר עֲמִיתִי—*Et ſuper virum proximum meum.* Montanus.

Digitized by Google

Againſt Chriſt his fellow, his next neighbour, the delight of his ſoul, the ſword here receives its commiſſion.

Thirdly, You have here the diſmal conſequent of this deadly ſtroke upon the ſhepherd. And that is the ſcattering of the ſheep. By the ſheep underſtand here, that little flock, the diſciples, which followed this ſhepherd till he was ſmitten, i. e. apprehended by his enemies, and they were ſcattered, i. e. diſperſed, they all forſook him and fled. And ſo Chriſt was left alone, amidſt his enemies. Not one durſt make a ſtand for him, or own him in that hour of his danger.

Fourthly, And laſtly, Here is a gracious mitigation of this ſad diſperſion, "I will turn my hand upon the little ones." By little ones he means the ſame that before he called ſheep; but the expreſſion is deſignedly varied, to ſhew their feebleneſs and weakneſs, which appeared in their relapſe from Chriſt. And by turning his hand upon them, underſtand God's gracious reduction, and gathering of them again after their ſad diſperſion, ſo that they ſhall not be loſt, though ſcattered for the preſent. For after the Lord was riſen, he went before them into Galilee, as he promiſed, Matth. xxvi. 31. And gathered them again by a gracious hand, ſo that not one of them was loſt but the ſon of perdition.

The words thus opened, I ſhall obſerve ſuitably to the method I have propoſed.

Doct. *That Chriſt's deareſt friends forſook and left him alone, in the time of his greateſt diſtreſs and danger.*

This doctrine containing only matter of fact, and that alſo ſo plainly delivered by the pens of the ſeveral faithful Evangeliſts, I need ſpend no longer time in the proof of it, than to refer you to the ſeveral teſtimonies they have given to it. But I ſhall rather chuſe to fit and prepare it for uſe, by explaining theſe four queſtions.

Firſt, Who were the ſheep that were ſcattered from their ſhepherd, and left him alone?

Secondly, What evil was there in this their ſcattering?

Thirdly, What were the grounds and cauſes of it?

Fourthly, and laſtly, What was the iſſue and event of it?

Firſt, Who were theſe ſheep that were diſperſed and ſcattered from their ſhepherd when he was ſmitten. It is evident they were thoſe precious elect ſouls that he had gathered to himſelf, who had long followed him, and dearly loved him, and were dearly beloved of him. They were perſons that had left all and followed him, and, till that time, faithfully continued with him in his temptations, Luke xxii. 28. And were all reſolved ſo to do,

Digitized by Google

though they ſhould die with him, Matth. xxvi. 35. Theſe were the perſons.

Secondly, But were they as good as their word? Did they indeed ſtick faithfully to him? No, they all forſook him and fled. Theſe ſheep were ſcattered. This was not indeed a total and final apoſtaſy, that is the fall proper to the hypocrite, the temporary believer, who, like a comet, expires when that earthly matter is ſpent that maintained the blaze for a time.

Theſe were ſtars fixed in their orb, though clouded and overcaſt for a time. This was but a miſt or fog, which overſpreads the earth in the morning till the ſun be riſen, and then it clears up and proves a fair day. But though it was not a total and final apoſtaſy; yet it was a very ſinful and ſad relapſe from Jeſus Chriſt, as will appear by conſidering the following aggravations and circumſtances of it. For,

Firſt, This relapſe of theirs was againſt the very articles of agreement, which they had ſealed to Chriſt at their firſt admiſſion into his ſervice; he had told them, in the beginning, what they muſt reſolve upon, Luke xiv. 26, 27. "If any man come to me, "and hate not his father and mother, and wife, and children, "and brethren, and ſiſters, yea, and his own life alſo, he cannot "be my diſciple. And whoſoever doth not bear his croſs, and "come after me, cannot be my diſciple." Accordingly they ſubmitted to theſe terms, and told him they had left all and followed him, Mark x. 28. Againſt this engagement made to Chriſt, they now ſin. Here was unfaithfulneſs.

Secondly, As it was againſt the very terms of their admiſſion, ſo it was againſt the very principles of grace implanted by Chriſt in their hearts. They were holy ſanctified perſons, in whom dwelt the love and fear of God. By theſe they were ſtrongly inclined to adhere to Chriſt, in the time of his ſufferings, as appears by thoſe honeſt reſolves they had made in the caſe. Their grace ſtrongly inclined them to their duty, their corruptions ſwayed them the contrary way. Grace bid them ſtand, corruption bid them fly. Grace told them it was their duty to ſhare in the ſufferings as well as in the glory of Chriſt. Corruption repreſented theſe ſufferings as intolerable, and bid them ſhift for themſelves whilſt they might. So that here muſt needs be a force and violence offered to their light, and the loving conſtraints thereof; which is no ſmall evil.

For though I grant it was a ſudden, ſurprizing temptation, yet it cannot be imagined that this fact was wholly deliberate; nor that, for ſo long time, they were without any debate or reaſonings about their duty.

Thirdly, As it was againſt their own principles, ſo it was much

Digitized by Google

againſt the honour of their Lord and Maſter. By this their ſinful flight they expoſed the Lord Jeſus to the contempt and ſcorn of his enemies. This ſome conceive is imported in that queſtion which the High-prieſt aſked him, John xviii. 19. "The High-prieſt "then aſked Jeſus of his diſciples, and of his doctrine." He aſked him of his diſciples, how many he had, and what was become of them now? And what was the reaſon they forſook their maſter, and left him to ſhift for himſelf when danger appeared? But to thoſe queſtions Chriſt made no reply. He would not accuſe them to their enemies, though they had deſerted him. But, doubtleſs, it did not a little reflect upon Chriſt, that there was not one of all his friends that durſt own their relation to him, in a time of danger.

Fourthly, As it was againſt Chriſt's honour, ſo it was againſt their own ſolemn promiſe made to him before his apprehenſion, to live and die with him. They had paſſed their word, and given their promiſe that they would not flinch from him, Mat. xxvi. 35. "Peter ſaid to him, though I ſhould die with thee, yet will I not "deny thee. Likewiſe alſo ſaid all the diſciples." This made it a perfidious relapſe. Here they break promiſe with Chriſt who never did ſo with them. He might have told them when he met them afterwards in Galilee, as the Roman ſoldier told his general, when he refuſed his petition after the war was ended, *I did not ſerve you ſo at the battle of* Actium.

Fifthly, As it was againſt their ſolemn promiſe to Chriſt, ſo it was againſt Chriſt's heart-melting expoſtulations with them, which ſhould have abode in their hearts while they lived. For when others that followed him went back, and walked no more with him, Jeſus ſaid to theſe very men, that now forſook him at laſt, *Will ye alſo go away?* There is an emphaſis in [ye] *q. d.* What, ye that from eternity were given to me! Ye whom I have called, loved, and honoured above others, for whoſe ſakes I am ready and reſolved to die. "Will ye alſo forſake me?" John vi. 67. Whatever others do, I expect other things from you.

Sixthly, As it was againſt Chriſt's heart-melting expoſtulations with them, ſo it was againſt a late direful example preſented to them in the fall of Judas. In him, as in a glaſs, they might ſee how fearful a thing it is to apoſtatize from Chriſt. They had heard Chriſt's dreadful threats againſt him. They were preſent when he called him the ſon of perdition, John xviii. 11. They had heard Chriſt ſay of him, "Good had it been if he had never "been born." An expreſſion able to ſcare the deadeſt heart. They ſaw he had left Chriſt the evening before. And that very day, in which they fled, he hanged himſelf. And yet they fly. For all this they forſake Chriſt.

Digitized by Google

Seventhly, As it was againſt the dreadful warning given them in the fall of Judas, ſo it was againſt the law of love, which ſhould have knit them cloſer to Chriſt, and to one another.

If to avoid the preſent ſhock of perſecution, they had fled, yet ſurely they ſhould have kept together, praying, watching, encouraging, and ſtrengthening one another. This had made it a leſſer evil: but as they all forſook Chriſt, ſo they forſook one another alſo; for it is ſaid, John xvi. 32. "They ſhall go every "man to his own, and leave Chriſt alone," (i. e. ſaith Beza) every man to his own houſe, and to his own buſineſs. They forſook each other, as well as Chriſt. O what an hour of temptation was this!

Eighthly, and laſtly, this their departure from Chriſt, was accompanied with ſome offence at Chriſt. For ſo he tells them, Mat. xxvi. 31. "All ye ſhall be offended becauſe of me this "night." The word is, σκανδαλισθησεσθε, you ſhall be ſcandalized at me, or in me*. Some think the ſcandal they took at Chriſt was this, that when they ſaw he was fallen into his enemies hands, and could no longer defend himſelf; they then began to queſtion whether he were the Chriſt or no, ſince he could not defend himſelf from his enemies. Others, more rightly, underſtand it of their ſhameful flight from Chriſt, ſeeing it was not now ſafe to abide longer with him. That ſeeing he gave himſelf into their hands, they thought it adviſeable to provide as well as they could for themſelves, and, ſomewhere or other, to take refuge from the preſent ſtorm, which had overtaken him. This was the nature and quality of the fact. We enquire,

Thirdly, Into the grounds and reaſons of it. Which were three.

Firſt, God's ſuſpending wonted influences and aids of grace from them. They were not wont to do ſo. They never did ſo afterwards. They would not have done ſo now, had there been influences of power, zeal, and love from heaven upon them. But how then ſhould Chriſt have borne the heat and burden of the day? How ſhould he tread the wine-preſs alone? How ſhould his ſorrows have been extreme, unmixed, ſuccourleſs (as it behoved them to be) if they had ſtuck faithfully to him in his troubles? No, no, it muſt not be; Chriſt muſt not have the leaſt relief or comfort from any creature; and therefore, that he might be left alone, to grapple hand to hand with the wrath of God, and of men; the Lord for a time

* They thought, either that he was not the Chriſt, as they had hitherto believed, becauſe he could not defend himſelf from his enemies, or that it was not adviſeable, for his ſake, to expoſe themſelves to the hazard of death. *Pareus.*

Digitized by Google

with-holds his encouraging, ſtrengthening influences from them; and then, like Samſon when he had loſt his locks, they were weak as other men.

"Be ſtrong in the Lord, and in the power of his might," ſaith the apoſtle, Eph. vi. 10. If that be with-held, our reſolutions and purpoſes melt away before a temptation, as ſnow before the ſun.

Secondly, As God permitted it, and with-held uſual aid from them; ſo the efficacy of that temptation was great, yea, much greater than ordinary. As they were weaker than they were uſed to be, ſo the temptation was ſtronger than any they had yet met withal. It is called, Luke xxii. 53. "Their hour and the power "of darkneſs." A ſifting, *winnowing hour*, ver. 46. O it was a black and cloudy day. Never had the diſciples met with ſuch a whirlwind, ſuch a furious ſtorm before. The devil deſired but to have the winnowing of them in that day, and ſo would have ſifted and winnowed them, that their faith had utterly failed, had not Chriſt ſecured it by his prayer for them. So that it was an extraordinary trial that was upon them.

Thirdly, and *laſtly*, That which concurred to their ſhameful relapſe, as a ſpecial cauſe of it, was the remaining corruptions that were in their hearts yet unmortified. Their knowledge was but little, and their faith not much. Upon the account of their weakneſs in grace, they were called *little ones* in the text. And as their graces were weak, ſo their corruptions were ſtrong. Their unbelief, and carnal fears grew powerfully upon them.

Do not cenſure them, reader, in thy thoughts, nor deſpiſe them for this their weakneſs. Neither ſay in thy heart, Had I been there as they were, I would never have done as they did. They thought as little of doing what they did, as you, or any of the ſaints do; and as much did their ſouls deteſt and abhor it: but here thou mayeſt ſee, whither a ſoul that fears God may be carried, if his corruptions be irritated by ſtrong temptations, and God with-holds uſual influences.

Fourthly, and *Laſtly*, Let us view the iſſue of this ſad apoſtaſy of theirs. And you ſhall find it ended far better than it began. Though theſe ſheep were ſcattered for a time, yet the Lord made good his promiſe, in turning his hand upon theſe little ones, to gather them. The morning was over-caſt, but the evening was clear.

Peter repents of his perfidious denial of Chriſt, and never denied him more. All the reſt likewiſe returned to Chriſt, and never forſook him any more. He that was afraid at the voice of a damſel, afterwards feared not the frowns of the mighty. And they that durſt not own Chriſt now, afterwards confeſſed him openly be-

Digitized by Google

fore councils, and rejoiced that they were counted worthy to ſuffer for his ſake, Acts v. 41. They that were now as timorous as hares, and ſtarted at every ſound, afterward became as bold as lions, and feared not any danger, but ſealed their confeſſion of Chriſt with their blood. For though, at this time, they forſook him, it was not voluntarily, but by ſurpriſal. Though they forſook him, they ſtill loved him; though they fled from him, there ſtill remained a gracious principle in them; the root of the matter was ſtill in them, which recovered them again.

To conclude: Though they forſook Chriſt, yet Chriſt never forſook them: he loved them ſtill; "Go tell the diſciples, and tell "Peter, that he goeth before you into Galilee," Mark xvi. 7. q. d. Let them not think that I ſo remember their unkindneſs, as to own them no more: No, I love them ſtill.

The uſe of this is contained in the following inferences.

Inf. 1. Did the diſciples forſake Chriſt, though they had ſuch ſtrong perſuaſions and reſolutions never to do it? Then we ſee, *That ſelf-confidence is a ſin too incident to the beſt of men.* They little thought their hearts would have proved ſo baſe and deceitful, as they found them to be when they were tried. "Though all "men forſake thee (ſaith Peter) yet will not I." Good man, he reſolved honeſtly, but he knew not what a feather he ſhould be in the wind of temptation, if God once left him to his own fears.

Little reaſon have the beſt of ſaints to depend upon their inherent grace, let their ſtock be as large as it will. The angels left to themſelves, quickly left their own habitations, Jude 6. Upon which, * one well obſerves, That the beſt of created perfections, are of themſelves defectible. Every excellency, without the prop of divine preſervation, is but a weight which tends to a fall. The angels in their innocency, were but frail, without God's ſuſtentation; even grace itſelf is but a creature, and therefore purely dependent. It is not from its being and nature, but from the aſſiſtance of ſomething without it, that it is kept from annihilation. What becomes of the ſtream, if the fountain ſupply it not? What continuance hath the reflection in the glaſs, if the man that looks into it, turn away his face? The conſtant ſupplies of the Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt, are the food and fewel of all our graces. The beſt men will ſhew themſelves but men if God leave them. He who hath ſet them up, muſt alſo keep them. It is ſafer to be humble with one talent, than proud with ten; yea, better to be an humble worm, than a proud angel. Adam had more advantage to maintain his ſtation than any of you. For though he were left to the liberty of his own mutable and ſelf-determining will; and tho' he

* Mr Jenkin, *in loc.*

Digitized by Google

was created upright, and had no inherent corruption to endanger him, yet he fell.

And ſhall we be ſelf-confident, after ſuch inſtances of human frailty! Alas, Chriſtian! What match art thou for principalities and powers, and ſpiritual wickedneſs! "Be not high-minded, but fear." When you have conſidered well the example of † Noah, Lot, David, and Hezekiah, men famous and renowned in their generations, who all fell by temptations; yea, and that when one would think they had never been better provided to cope with them. Lot fell after, yea, preſently after the Lord had thruſt him out of Sodom, and his eyes had ſeen the direful puniſhment of ſin. Hell, as it were, rained upon them out of heaven. Noah, in like manner, immediately after God's wonderful, and aſtoniſhing preſervation of him in the ark; when he ſaw a world of men and women, periſhing in the floods for their ſins. David, after the Lord had ſettled the kingdom on him, which for ſin he rent from Saul, and given him reſt in his houſe. Hezekiah was but juſt up from a great ſickneſs, wherein the Lord wrought a wonderful ſalvation for him. Did ſuch men, and at ſuch times, when one would think no temptations ſhould have prevailed, fall; and that ſo foully? Then "let him that thinks he ſtandeth, take heed leſt "he fall." O be not high-minded, but fear.

Inf. 2. Did Chriſt ſtand his ground, and go through with his ſuffering-work, when all that had followed him, forſook him? *Then a reſolved adherence to God, and duty, though left alone, without company or encouragement, is Chriſt-like, and truly excellent.* You ſhall not want better company, than that which hath forſaken you in the way of God. Elijah complains, 1 Kings xix. 10. "They "have forſaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and "ſlain thy prophets with the ſword; and I, even I only, am left, "and they ſeek my life, to take it away." And yet all this did not damp or diſcourage him in following the Lord; for ſtill he was very jealous for the Lord God of Hoſts.

Paul complains, 2 Tim. iv. 16. "At my firſt anſwer no man "ſtood by me, all men forſook me: nevertheleſs the Lord ſtood "with me." And as the Lord ſtood by him, ſo he ſtood by his God alone, without any aids or ſupport from men. How great an argument of integrity is this! He that profeſſes Chriſt for company, will alſo leave him for company. But to be faithful to God, when forſaken of men; to be a Lot, in Sodom; a Noah, in a corrupted generation; oh, how excellent is it! It is ſweet to travel over this earth to heaven, in the company of the ſaints, that are bound thither with us, if we can; but if we can meet no

† Gen. ix. 21, 22. and xix. 36. 2 Sam. xi. 2. 2 Kings xx. 12.

Digitized by Google

company, we must not be discouraged to go on. It is not unlike, but before you have gone many steps farther, you may have cause to say, as one did once, *Never less alone, than when alone.*

Inference 3. Did the disciples thus forsake Christ, and yet were all recovered at last? *Then, though believers are not privileged from backslidings, yet they are secured from final apostasy and ruin.* The new creature may be sick, it cannot die. Saints may fall, but they shall rise again, Micah vii. 8. The highest flood, of natural zeal and resolution, may ebb, and be wholly dried up; but saving grace is "a well of water, still springing up into everlasting life," John iv. 14. God's unchangeable election, the frame and constitution of the New Covenant, the meritorious and prevalent intercession of Jesus Christ, do give the believer abundant security against the danger of a total and final apostasy. "My Father, "which gave them me, saith Christ, is greater than all: and none "is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand," John x. 29.

And again, "The foundation of God standeth sure, having "this seal; the Lord knoweth who are his," 2 Tim. ii. 19. Every person committed to Christ by the Father, shall be brought by him to the Father, and not one wanting.

God hath also so framed and ordered the new covenant, that none of those souls, who are within the blessed clasp and bond of it can possibly be lost. It is settled upon immutable things: and we know all things are as their foundations be, Heb. vi. 18, 19. Among the many glorious promises contained in the bundle of promises, this is one, "I will not turn away from them, to do them "good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not "depart from me."

And as the fear of God in our hearts, pleads in us against sin, so our potent intercessor in the heavens, pleads for us with the Father; and by reason thereof, we cannot finally miscarry, Rom. viii. 34, 35. Upon these grounds, we may (as the apostle in the place last cited doth) triumph in that full security which God hath given us; and say, What "shall separate us from the love of God?" Understand it either of God's to us, as Calvin, Beza, and Martyr do; or of our love to God, as Ambrose and Augustine do: it is true in both senses, and a most comfortable truth.

Inference 4. Did the sheep fly, when the shepherd was smitten; such men, and so many forsake Christ in the trial? *Then learn how sad a thing it is for the best of men to be left to their own carnal fears in a day of temptation:* This was it that made those good men shrink away so shamefully from Christ in that trial: "The fear of man brings a snare," Prov. xxix. 25. In that snare these good souls were taken, and for a time held fast.

Oh what work will this unruly passion make, if the fear of God

Digitized by Google

do not over-rule it! Is it not a shame to a Christian, a man of faith to see himself out-done by an Heathen? Shall natural conscience and courage make them stand and keep their places in times of danger; when we shamefully turn our backs upon duty, because we see duty and danger together?

When the emperor Vespasian had commanded Fluidius Priscus not to come to the senate; or, if he did, to speak nothing but what he would have him; the senator returned this brave and noble answer. "*That as he was a senator, it was fit he should be at the "senate; and if, being there, he were required to give his advice, "he would speak freely, that which his conscience commanded "him." The emperor threatening that then he should die; he returned thus, "Did I ever tell you that I was immortal? Do you "what you will, and I will do what I ought. It is in your power "to put me to death unjustly, and in me to die constantly." O think, what mischiefs your fears may do yourselves, and the discovery of them to others. O learn to trust God with your lives, liberties, and comforts, in the way of your duty; and *at what time you are afraid* trust in him: and do not magnify poor dust and ashes, as to be scared, by their threat, from your God and your duty. The politic design of Satan herein, is to affright you out of your coverts, where you are safe, into the net. I will enlarge on this no farther; I have† elsewhere laid down fourteen rules for the cure of this, in what of mine is public.

Inf. 5. Learn hence, *How much a man may differ from himself, according as the Lord is with him, or withdrawn from him.* The Christian does not always differ from other men, but sometimes from himself also: yea, so great is the difference betwixt himself and himself, as if he were not the same man. And where is he that doth not so experience it? Sometimes bold and couragious, despising dangers, bearing down all discouragements in the strength of zeal, and love to God: at another time faint, feeble, and discouraged at every petty thing. Whence is this but from the different administrations of the Spirit, who sometimes gives forth more, and sometimes less, of his gracious influence. These very men that flinched now, when the Spirit was more abundantly shed forth upon them, could boldly own Christ before the council, and despised all dangers for his sake.

A little dog, if his master be by, and encourage him, will venture upon a greater beast than himself. Peter stood at the door without, when the other disciple, (or one of the other disciples,

* Charron, of wisdom, p. 358.
† A Saint indeed.

Digitized by Google

as the Syriac turns it, and * Grotius approves it as the beſt), i. e. one of the private diſciples that lived at Jeruſalem, went in ſo boldly, John xviii. 16, 17. We are ſtrong or weak, according to the degrees of aſſiſting grace. So that as you cannot take the juſt meaſure of a Chriſtian by one act, ſo neither muſt they judge of themſelves, by what they ſometimes feel in themſelves.

But when their ſpirits are low, and their hearts diſcouraged, they ſhould rather ſay to their ſouls, "Hope in God, for I ſhall yet "praiſe him:" It is low with me now, but it will be better.

Inf. 6. Was the ſword drawn againſt the Shepherd, and he left alone to receive the mortal ſtrokes of it? *How ſhould all adore both the juſtice and mercy of God ſo illuſtriouſly diſplayed herein!* Here is the triumph of divine juſtice, and the higheſt triumph that ever it had, to ſingle forth the chief Shepherd, the man that is God's fellow, and ſheathe its ſword in his breaſt for ſatisfaction. No wonder it is drawn and brandiſhed with ſuch a triumph; awake rejoicingly, O ſword, againſt my Shepherd, *&c.* For in this blood ſhed by it, it hath more glory than if the blood of all the men and women in the world had been ſhed.

And no leſs is the mercy and goodneſs of God herein ſignalized, in giving the ſword a commiſſion againſt the Man, his fellow, rather than againſt us. Why had he not rather ſaid, Awake, O ſword, againſt the men that are mine enemies; ſhed the blood of them that have ſinned againſt me, than ſmite the Shepherd, and only ſcatter the ſheep. Bleſſed be God, the dreadful ſword was not drawn and brandiſhed againſt our ſouls; that God did not ſet it to our breaſts; that he had not made it fat with our fleſh, and bathed it in our blood; that his fellow was ſmitten, that his enemies might be ſpared. O what manner of love was this! Bleſſed be God therefore for Jeſus Chriſt, who received the fatal ſtroke himſelf; and hath now ſo ſheathed that ſword in its ſcabbard, that it ſhall never be drawn any more againſt any that believe in him.

Inf. 7. Were the ſheep ſcattered when the Shepherd was ſmitten? Learn hence, *That the beſt of men know not their own ſtrength, till they come to the trial.* Little did theſe holy men imagine ſuch a cowardly ſpirit had been in them, till temptation put it to the proof. Let this therefore be a caution for ever to the people of God. You reſolve never to forſake Chriſt, you do well; but ſo did theſe, and yet were ſcattered from him. You can never take a juſt meaſure of your own ſtrength, till temptation have tried it. It is ſaid, Deut. viii. 2. that God *led* the people ſo many years *in the*

* One of the other diſciples, not any one of the twelve, but ſome other, an inhabitant of Jeruſalem, not ſo well known to be a favourer of Jeſus. *Grotius.*

Digitized by Google

wilderneſs, to prove them; and *to know* them, (i. e. to make them know) *what was in their hearts.* Little did they think ſuch unbelief, murmurings, diſcontents, and a ſpirit bent to backſlidings, had been in them; until their ſtraits in the wilderneſs gave them the ſad experience of theſe things.

Inf. 8. Did the dreadful ſword of divine juſtice ſmite the Shepherd, God's own fellow; and at the ſame time the flock, from whom all its outward comforts aroſe, were ſcattered from him? Then learn, *That the holieſt of men have no reaſon, either to repine or deſpond, though God ſhould at once ſtrip them of all their outward and inward comforts together.* He that did this by the man his fellow, may much rather do it by the man his friend. *Smite my Shepherd;* there is all comfort gone from the inward man; *Scatter the ſheep,* there is all comfort gone from the outward man. What refreſhments had Chriſt in this world, but ſuch as came immediately from his Father, or thoſe holy ones now ſcattered from him? In one day he loſeth both heavenly and earthly comforts. Now, as God dealt by Chriſt, he may, at one time or other, deal with his people. You have your comforts from heaven; ſo had Chriſt, in a fuller meaſure than ever you had, or can have. He had comforts from his little flock; you have your comforts from the ſociety of the ſaints, the ordinances of God, comfortable relations, *&c.* Yet none of theſe are ſo firmly ſettled upon you, but you may be left deſtitute of them all in one day. God did take all comfort from Chriſt, both outward and inward; and are you greater than he? God ſometimes takes outward, and leaves inward comfort; ſometimes he takes inward, and leaves outward comfort: but the time may come, when God may ſtrip you of both.

This was the caſe of Job, a favourite of God, who was bleſſed with outward and inward comforts; yet a time came when God ſtripped him of all, and made him poor to a proverb, as to all outward comfort; and the venom of his arrows drank up his ſpirit, and the inward comforts thereof.

Should the Lord deal thus with any of you, how ſeaſonable and relieving will the following conſiderations be?

Firſt, Though the Lord deal thus with you, yet this is no new thing; he hath ſo dealt with others, yea, with Jeſus Chriſt that was his fellow. If theſe things were done in the green tree, in him that never deſerved it for any ſin of his own, how little reaſon have we to complain? Nay,

Secondly, Therefore did this befal Jeſus Chriſt before you, that the like condition might be ſanctified to you, when you ſhall be brought into it. For therefore did Jeſus Chriſt paſs through ſuch varieties of conditions, on purpoſe that he might take away the

Digitized by Google

curſe, and leave a bleſſing in thoſe conditions, againſt the time that you ſhould come into them. Moreover,

Thirdly, Though inward comforts and outward comforts were both removed from Chriſt, in one day, yet he wanted not ſupport in the abſence of both. How relieving a conſideration is this! John xvi. 32. "Behold, (ſaith he) the hour cometh, yea, is now "come that ye ſhall be ſcattered, every man to his own, and ſhall "leave me alone; and yet I am not alone, becauſe the Father is "with me." With me by way of ſupport, when not by way of comfort. Thy God, Chriſtian, can in like manner ſupport thee, when all ſenſible comforts ſhrink away together from thy ſoul and body in one day.

Laſtly, It deſerves a remark, that this comfortleſs forſaken condition of Chriſt, immediately preceded the day of his greateſt glory and comfort. Naturaliſts obſerve, the greateſt darkneſs is a little before the dawning of the morning. It was ſo with Chriſt, it may be ſo with thee. It was but a little while and he had better company than theirs that forſook him. Act therefore your faith upon this, that the moſt glorious light uſually follows the thickeſt darkneſs. The louder your groans are now, the louder your triumphs hereafter will be. The horror of your preſent, will but add to the luſtre of your future ſtate.

SERMON XXIX.

Of the Manner of CHRIST's Death, in reſpect of the Patience thereof.

ISA. liii. 7.

He was oppreſſed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the ſlaughter, and as a ſheep before her ſhearers is dumb, ſo he opened not his mouth.

HOW our Lord Jeſus Chriſt carried on the work of our redemption in his humble ſtate, both in his incarnation, life, and death, hath in part been diſcovered in the former ſermons. I have ſhewed you the kind or nature of that death he died; and am now engaged, by the method propoſed, to open the manner of his death. The ſolitarineſs or lonelineſs of Chriſt in his ſufferings, was the ſubject of the laſt ſermon. The patience and meekneſs of Chriſt in his ſufferings come, in order, to be opened in this.

This chapter treats wholly of the ſufferings of Chriſt, and the

Digitized by Google

bleſſed fruits thereof. Hornbeck * tells us of a learned Jew, "that ingenuouſly confeſſed this very chapter converted him to "the Chriſtian faith. And ſuch delight he had in it, that he read "it more than a thouſand times over." Such is the clearneſs of this prophecy, that he who penned it, is deſervedly ſtiled the evangelical prophet. I cannot allow time to annalize the chapter; but my work lying in the ſeventh verſe, I ſhall ſpeak to theſe two branches or parts of it, viz. The grievous ſufferings of Chriſt, and the glorious ornament he put upon them.

Firſt, Chriſt's grievous ſufferings; "he was afflicted, and he "was oppreſſed, brought to the ſlaughter, and ſhorn as a ſheep," "i. e. he loſt both fleece and blood, life, and comforts of life. "He was oppreſſed;" the † word ſignifies both "to anſwer and "oppreſs, humble or depreſs." The other word, rendered *afflicted*, ſignifies "to exact and afflict," and ſo implies Chriſt to ſtand before God, as a ſurety before the creditor; who exacts the utmoſt ſatisfaction from him, by cauſing him to ſuffer according to the utmoſt rigour and ſeverity of the law. It did not ſuffice that he was ſhorn as a ſheep, i. e. that he was ſtripped and deprived of his riches, ornaments, and comforts; but his blood and life muſt go for it alſo. He is brought to the ſlaughter. Theſe were his grievous ſufferings.

Secondly, Here is the glorious ornament he put upon thoſe grievous ſufferings, even the ornament of a meek and patient ſpirit. *He opened not his mouth*; but went as a *ſheep* to be *ſhorn*, or *a lamb to the ſlaughter*. The lamb goes as quiet to the ſlaughter-houſe, as to the fold. By this lively and lovely ſimilitude, the patience of Chriſt is here expreſſed to us‡. Yet Chriſt's dumbneſs and ſilence is not to be underſtood ſimply, but univerſally; as though he ſpake nothing at all when he ſuffered; for he uttered many excellent and weighty words upon the croſs, as you ſhall hear in the following diſcourſes; but it muſt be underſtood reſpectively, i. e. he never opened his mouth repiningly, paſſionately, or revengefully, under his greateſt tortures and higheſt provocations. Whence the note is,

Doct. *That Jeſus Chriſt ſupported the burden of his ſufferings, with admirable patience and meekneſs of ſpirit.*

It is a true obſervation, that meekneſs inviteth injury, but always to its own coſt. And it was evidently verified in the ſuffer-

---

* *Ingenue profitetor illud ipſum caput ad fidem Chriſtianam me adduxiſſe, nam plus millies illud caput perlegi.* Hornbeck contra Jud. lib. 6. cap. 1. p. 408.

† נענה *Reſpondit. Humiliavit. Demiſit. Depreſſit.* נגש *Exegit.* Buxtorf.

‡ That he may the more commend Chriſt's patience and meekneſs, as his glorious ornament, he compares him to a ſheep and a lamb. *Marlor. in loc.*

Digitized by Google

ings of Chriſt. Chriſt's meekneſs triumphed over the affronts and injuries of his enemies, much more than they triumphed over him. Patience never had a more glorious triumph, than it had upon the croſs.

The meekneſs and patience of his ſpirit, amidſt injuries and provocations, is excellently ſet forth in 1 Pet. ii. 22, 23. "Who did "no ſin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who when he "was reviled, reviled not again; when he ſuffered, he threatened "not, but committed himſelf to him that judgeth righteouſly."

In this point we have theſe three things to open doctrinally.

1. The burden of ſufferings, and provocations that Jeſus Chriſt was oppreſſed with,

2. The meekneſs and admirable patience with which he ſupported that burden.

3. The cauſes and grounds of that perfect patience which he then exerciſed.

Firſt, The burden of ſufferings and provocations which Chriſt ſupported, was very great; For on him met all ſorts and kinds of trouble at once, and thoſe in their higheſt degrees and fulleſt ſtrength. Troubles in his ſoul, and theſe were the ſoul of his troubles. His ſoul was laden with ſpiritual horrors and troubles, as deep as it could ſwim, Mark xiv. 33. "He began to be ſore "amazed and very heavy." The wrath of an infinite dreadful God beat him down to the duſt. His body full of pain and exquiſite tortures in every part. Not a member or ſenſe but was the ſeat and ſubject of torment.

His name and honour ſuffered the vileſt indignities, blaſphemies, and horrid reproaches that the malignity of Satan and wicked men could belch out againſt it. He was called a blaſphemer, ſeditious, one that had a devil, a glutton, a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and harlots, the carpenter's ſon, this fellow. He that was *God's fellow*, as you heard lately, now *this fellow*. Contempt was poured upon all his offices. Upon his kingly office, when they crowned him with thorns, arrayed him with purple, bowed the knee in mockery to him, and cried, "Hail king of the Jews." His prophetical office, when they blinded him, and then bid him "propheſy who ſmote him." His prieſtly office, when they reviled him on the croſs, ſaying, "He ſaved others, himſelf he "cannot ſave." They ſcourged him, ſpit in his face; and ſmote him on the head and face. Beſides, the very kind of death they put him to, was reproachful and ignominious; as you heard before.

Now all this, and much more than this, meeting at once upon an innocent and dignified perſon; one that was greater than all; that lay in the boſom of God; and from eternity had his ſmiles

Digitized by Google

and honours; upon one that could have cruſhed all his enemies as a moth; I ſay, for him to bear all this, without the leaſt diſcompoſure of ſpirit, or breach of patience, is the higheſt triumph of patience that ever was in the world. It was one of the greateſt wonders of that wonderful day:

Secondly, And that is the next thing we have to conſider, even this almighty patience and unpatterned meekneſs of Chriſt, ſupporting ſuch a burden with ſuch evenneſs and ſteadineſs of ſpirit. Chriſtian patience, or the grace of patience, *is an ability or power to ſuffer hard and heavy things, according to the will of God.*

It is a power, and a glorious power, that ſtrengthens the ſuffering ſoul to *bear*. It is our paſſive fortitude, Col. i. 11. "Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all "patience, and long-ſuffering with joyfulneſs;" i. e. ſtrengthened with the might or power of God himſelf: Or ſuch as might appear to be the proper impreſs and image of that divine power, which is both its principle and pattern. For the patience which God exerciſes towards ſinners, that daily wrong and load him, is called power, and great power, Numb. xiv. 17. "Let the power of my "Lord be great, as thou haſt ſpoken, ſaying, The Lord is long-"ſuffering, forgiving," &c. Hence it is obſerved, Prov. xxiv. 10. That the loſs or breaking of our patience under adverſity, argues a decay of ſtrength in the ſoul. "If thou faint in the day "of adverſity, thy ſtrength is ſmall."

It is a power or ability in the ſoul, *to bear hard, heavy, and difficult things**. Such only are the objects of patience. God hath ſeveral ſorts of burdens to impoſe upon his people. Some heavier, others lighter; ſome to be carried but a few hours, others many days; others all our days: ſome more ſpiritual, bearing upon the ſoul; ſome more external, touching or puniſhing the fleſh immediately; and the ſpirit by way of ſympathy: and ſometimes both ſorts are laid on together. So they were at this time on Chriſt. His ſoul burdened as deep as it could ſwim; full of the ſenſe, the bitter ſenſe and apprehenſion of the wrath of God: his body filled with tortures: in every member and ſenſe grief took up its lodging. Here was the higheſt exerciſe of patience.

It is a power to bear hard and heavy things, *according to the will of God*. Conſidering it in that reſpect, patience, the Chriſtian grace, differs from patience the moral virtue. So the apoſtle deſcribes it, 1 Pet. iv. 19. "Let them that ſuffer according to "the will of God," &c. i. e. who exerciſe patience graciouſly, as God would have them.

---

* Theſe two virtues, *viz.* ὑπομονη, i. e. patience, and μακροθυμια, i. e. meekneſs, are inſeparable concomitants of that ſtrength and fortitude, which the Spirit beſtows on us. *Dwen.*

Digitized by Google

And then our patience is, as Christ's most exactly was, according to the will of God; when it is as extensive, as intensive, and as protensive as God requires it to be.

First, When it is as *extensive* as God would have it. So was Christ's patience. It was a patience that stretched and extended itself to all, and every trouble and affliction, that came upon him. Troubles came upon him in troops, in multitudes. It is said, Psal. xl. 12. "Innumerable evils have compassed me about." Yet he found patience enough to receive them all. It is not with us. Our patience is often worn out. And like sick people, we fancy, if we were in another chamber, or bed, it would be better. If it were any other trouble than this, we could bear it. Christ had no exceptions at any burden his Father would lay on. His patience was as large as his trouble, and that was large indeed.

Secondly, It is then according to the will of God, when it is as *intensive* as God requires it to be, i. e. in the apostle's phrase, Jam. i. 4. When it hath its *perfect work*, or exercise; when it is not only extended to all kinds of troubles; but when it works in the highest and most perfect degree. And then may patience be said to be perfect (as it was in Christ) when it is *plenum sui, et prohibens alieni*, full of itself, and exclusive of its opposite. Christ's patience was full of itself, (i. e.) it included all that belonged to it. It was full of submission, peace, and serenity; full of obedience and complacency in his Father's will. He was in a perfect calm. As a lamb or sheep, (saith the text) that howls not, opposes not, but is dumb and quiet. And as his external behaviour, so his internal frame and temper of soul was most serene and calm. Not one repining thought against God. Not one revengeful thought against man once ruffled his Spirit, "Father forgive them, for they know not "what they do," was all the hurt he wished his worst enemies. And as it included all that belonged to it, so his perfect patience excluded all its opposites. No discontents, murmurings, despondencies had place in his heart. So that his patience was a most intensive, perfect patience. And as it was as extensive, and as intensive, so it was,

Thirdly, As *protensive* as God required it to be, (i. e.) it held out to the end of his trial. He did not faint at last. His troubles did not out-live his patience. He indeed was strengthened with all might unto all patience, and long-suffering. This was the patience of Christ our perfect pattern. He had not only patience but longanimity.

Thirdly, In the last place, let us inquire into the grounds and reasons of this his most perfect patience. And if you do so, you shall find perfect holiness, wisdom, fore-knowledge, faith, heaven-

Digitized by Google

ly-mindedneſs, and obedience, at the root of this perfect patience.

Firſt, This admirable patience and meekneſs of Chriſt, was the fruit and offspring of his *perfect holineſs*. His nature was free from thoſe corruptions, that ours groan and labour under; otherwiſe he could never have carried it at this rate. Take the meek Moſes who excelled all others in that grace, and let him be tried in that very grace, wherein he excels, and ſee how "unadviſedly he may "ſpeak with his lips," Pſal. cvi. 33. Take a Job, whoſe famous patience is trumpeted and reſounded over all the world; *ye have heard of the patience of Job*; and let him be tried by outward and inward troubles, meeting upon him in one day; and even a Job may curſe the day wherein he was born. Envy, revenge, diſcontent, deſpondencies, are weeds naturally ſpringing up in the corrupt ſoil of our ſinful natures, "I ſaw a little child grow pale with "envy," ſaid Auſtin*. And the ſpirit that is in us luſteth unto envy, (ſaith the apoſtle) Jam. iv. 5. The principles of all theſe evils being in our natures, they will ſhew themſelves in time of trial. The old man is fretful and paſſionate. But it was otherwiſe with Chriſt. His nature was like a pure chryſtal glaſs, full of pure fountain water, which though ſhaken and agitated never ſo much, cannot ſhew, becauſe it hath no dregs. "The prince of this world "cometh, and hath nothing in me," John xiv. 30. No principle of corruption, for a handle to temptation. Our high-prieſt was holy, harmleſs, undefiled, ſeparate from ſinners, Heb. vii. 26.

Secondly, The meekneſs and patience of Chriſt proceeded from the *infinite wiſdom* with which he was filled. The wiſer any man is, the more patient he is. Hence meekneſs, the fruit, is denominated from patience, the root that bears it, Jam. iii. 13. "The "meekneſs of wiſdom." And anger is lodged in folly, its proper cauſe, Eccleſ. vii. 9. "Anger reſteth in the boſom of fools." Seneca † would allow no place for paſſion in a wiſe man's breaſt. Wiſe men uſe to ponder, conſider, and weigh things deliberately in their judgments, before they ſuffer their affections and paſſions to be ſtirred and enraged. Hence come the conſtancy and ſerenity of their ſpirits. As wiſe Solomon hath obſerved, Prov. xvii. 27. "A man of underſtanding is of an excellent (or as the Hebrew is) a cool, ſpirit."

Now wiſdom filled the ſoul of Chriſt. He is wiſdom in the ab-

* *Vidi zelantem parvulum.* Aug.

† If we believe that neither great, nor frequent anger, takes place in the mind of the wiſe man; why may we not free him from the whole of this paſſion. *Seneca on paſſion.*

Digitized by Google

ſtract, Prov. viii. In him are hid all the treaſures of wiſdom, Col. ii. 3. Hence it was that he was no otherwiſe moved with the revilings and abuſes of his enemies, than a wiſe phyſician is with the impertinencies of his diſtempered, and craſy patient.

Thirdly, And as his patience flowed from his perfect wiſdom and knowledge, ſo alſo from his *fore-knowledge*. He had a perfect proſpect of all thoſe things from eternity, which befel him afterwards. They came not upon him by way of ſurpriſal. And therefore he wondered not at them when they came, as if ſome ſtrange thing had happened. He foreſaw all theſe things long before, Mark viii. 31. "And he began to teach them, that the Son "of man muſt ſuffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, "and chief prieſts, and ſcribes, and be killed." Yea, he had compacted and agreed with his Father to endure all this for our ſakes, before he aſſumed our fleſh. Hence, Iſa. l. 6. "I gave my "back to the ſmiters, and my cheeks to them that pulled off the "hair. I hid not my face from ſhame and ſpitting."

Now look as Chriſt in John xvi. 4. obviates all future offences his diſciples might take at ſuffering for his ſake, by telling them before-hand what they muſt expect. "Theſe things (ſaith he) "I told you, that when the time ſhall come, ye may remember "that I told you of them:" So he, fore-knowing what himſelf muſt ſuffer, and having agreed ſo to do, bare thoſe ſufferings with ſingular patience. "Jeſus therefore knowing all things that ſhould "come upon him, went forth, and ſaid unto them, whom ſeek "ye?" John xviii. 4.

Fourthly, As his patience ſprang from his fore-knowledge of his ſufferings; ſo from his faith which he exerciſed under all that he ſuffered in this world. His faith looked through all thoſe black and diſmal clouds, to the joy propoſed, Heb. xii. 2. He knew that though Pilate condemned, God would juſtify him. Iſa. l. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. And he ſet one over-againſt the other: he balanced the glory, into which he was to enter, with the ſufferings, through which he was to enter into it. He acted faith upon God for divine ſupport and aſſiſtance under ſuffering, as well as for glory, the fruit and reward of them, Pſal. xvi. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. *I have ſet* (or as the apoſtle varies it) "I foreſaw the Lord always before "me; becauſe he is at my right-hand I ſhall not be moved. "Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth." There is faith acted by Chriſt, for ſtrength to carry him through. And then it follows, "My fleſh alſo ſhall reſt in hope; for thou wilt "not leave my ſoul in hell, neither wilt thou ſuffer thine holy "one to ſee corruption. Thou wilt ſhew me the path of life. In "thy preſence is fulneſs of joy; at thy right-hand there are plea-"ſures for evermore." There is his faith acting upon the glory in-

Digitized by Google

to which he was to enter, after he had ſuffered theſe things: this filled him with peace.

Fifthly, As his faith, eying the glory into which he was paſſing, made him endure all things; ſo *the heavenlineſs* of his Spirit alſo filled him with a heavenly tranquillity and calmneſs of ſpirit under all his abuſes and injuries. It is a certain truth, that the more heavenly any man's ſpirit is, the more ſedate, compoſed and peaceful. "As "the higher heavens (ſaith * Seneca) are more ordinate and tran- "quil; there are neither clouds nor winds, ſtorms nor tempeſts; "they are the inferior heavens that lighten and thunder: the "nearer the earth the more tempeſtuous and unquiet: even ſo "the ſublime and heavenly mind is placed in a calm and quiet "ſtation."

Certainly that heart which is ſweetened frequently with heavenly, delightful communion with God, is not very apt to be imbittered with wrath, or ſoured with revenge againſt men. The peace of God doth βραβεύειν, appeaſe and end all ſtrifes and differences, as an umpire: ſo much that word, Col. iii. 15. imports. The heavenly Spirit marvellouſly affects a ſedate and quiet breaſt.

Now, never was there ſuch a heavenly ſoul on earth, ſince man inhabited it, as Chriſt was: he had moſt ſweet and wonderful communion with God: he had meat to eat, which others, yea, and thoſe his greateſt intimates, knew not of. The Son of man was in heaven upon earth, John iii. 13. Even in reſpect of that bleſſed heavenly communion he had with God, as well as in reſpect of his immenſe Deity: and that his heart was in heaven when he ſo patiently endured and digeſted the pain and ſhame of the croſs is evident from Heb. xii. 2. "for the joy ſet before him, "he endured the croſs, deſpiſing the ſhame." See where his eye and heart were, when he went as a lamb to the ſlaughter.

Sixthly, And laſtly, As his meekneſs and patience ſprang from the heavenlineſs and ſublimity of his ſpirit; ſo likewiſe, from the complete and abſolute *obedience* of it to his Father's will and pleaſure: he could moſt quietly ſubmit to all the will of God, and never regret at any part of the work aſſigned him by his Father. For you muſt know, that Chriſt's death in him was an act of obedience; he all along eying his Father's command and counſel in what he ſuffered, Phil. ii. 7, 8. John xviii. 11. Pſal. xl. 6, 7, 8. Now look, as the eying and conſidering the hand of God in an affliction, preſently becalms and quiets a gracious ſoul; as you ſee in David, 2 Sam. xvi. 11. "Let him alone, it may be God that hath,

* *Pars ſuperior mundi eſt ordinatior, ac propinqua ſoleribus, nec in nubem cogitur, nec in tempeſtatem impellitur, nec verſatur in turbinem; omni tumultu caret; inferiora fulminant. Eodem modo ſublimis animus quietus ſemper eſt, et in ſtatione tranquilla collocatur.* Seneca.

Digitized by Google

" bid him curſe David;" So much more it quieted Jeſus Chriſt, who was privy to the deſign and end of his Father, with whoſe will he all long complied; looking on Jews and Gentiles but as the inſtruments ignorantly fulfilling God's pleaſure, and ſerving that great deſign of his Father: this was his patience, and theſe the grounds of it.

Uſe 1. I might variouſly improve this point; but the direct and main uſe of it is, to preſs us to a Chriſt-like patience in all our ſufferings and troubles. And ſeeing in nothing we are more generally defective, and that defects of Chriſtians herein, are ſo prejudicial to religion, and uncomfortable to themſelves; I reſolve to wave all other uſes, and ſpend the remaining time wholly upon this branch; even a *perſuaſive* to Chriſtians unto all patience, in tribulations; to imitate their lamb-like Saviour. Unto this (Chriſtians) you are expreſsly called, 1 Pet. ii. 21, 22. " Becauſe Chriſt alſo " ſuffered for us, leaving us an example, that we ſhould follow " his ſteps. Who did no ſin, neither was guile found in his " mouth; who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he " ſuffered, he threatened not; but committed himſelf to him that " judgeth righteouſly." Here is your pattern; a perfect pattern! a lovely and excellent pattern! Will you be perſuaded to the imitation of Chriſt herein? Methinks I ſhould perſuade you to it: yea, every thing about you perſuades to patience in your ſufferings, as well as I: look which way you will, upward or downward, inward or outward, backward or forward, to the right-hand, or to the left, you ſhall find all things perſuading and urging the doctrine of patience upon you.

Firſt, *Look upwards*, when tribulations come upon you: look to that ſovereign Lord, that commiſſionates and ſends them upon you. You know troubles do not riſe out of the duſt, nor ſpring out of the ground, but are framed in heaven, Jer. xviii. 11. " Behold " I frame evil, and deviſe a device againſt you." Troubles and afflictions are of the Lord's framing and deviſing, to reduce his wandering people to himſelf: much like that device of Abſalom, in ſetting Joab's field of corn on fire, to bring Joab to him, 2 Sam. xiv. 30. In the frame of your afflictions, you may obſerve much of divine wiſdom in the *choice*, *meaſure*, and *ſeaſon* of your troubles: ſovereignty, in electing the inſtruments of your affliction; in making them as afflictive as he pleaſeth; and in making them obedient both to his call, in coming and going, when he pleaſeth. Now, could you in times of trouble look up to this ſovereign hand, in which your ſouls, bodies, and all their comforts and mercies are; how quiet would your hearts be! Pſal. xxxix. 9. " I was dumb, " and opened not my mouth, becauſe it is thy doing." 1 Sam. iii. 18. " It is the Lord, let him do what ſeemeth him good." Oh,

Digitized by Google

when we have to do with men, and look no higher, how do our ſpirits ſwell and riſe with revenge and impatience! But if you once come to ſee, that man as a rod in your Father's hand, you will be quiet; Pſal. xlvi. 10. "Be ſtill, and know that I am God;" q. d. conſider with whom you have to do; not with your fellow, but with your God, who can puff you to deſtruction with one blaſt of his mouth; in whoſe hand you are, as the clay in the potter's hand. It is for want of looking up to God in our troubles, that we fret, murmur, and deſpond at the rate we do.

Secondly, Look downward, and ſee what is below you, as well as up to that which is above you. You are afflicted, and you cannot bear it. Oh! no trouble like your trouble! never man in ſuch a caſe as you are! Well, well, caſt the eye of your mind downward, and ſee thoſe who lie much lower than you. Can you ſee none on earth in a more miſerable ſtate than yourſelves? Are you at the very bottom, and not a man below you? ſure there are thouſands in a ſadder caſe than you on earth. What is your affliction? Have you loſt a relation? others have loſt all. Have you loſt an eſtate, and are become poor? Well, but there are ſome you read of, Job xxx. 4, 5, 6, 7. "Who cut up mallows by the buſhes, "and juniper-roots for their meat. They are driven forth from "among men, they cried after them as after a thief. They dwell "in the cliffs of the vallies, in caves of the earth, and in the rocks. "Among the buſhes they brayed, under the nettles they were "gathered together." What difference, as to manner of life, do you find between the perſons here deſcribed, and the wild beaſts, that herd together in a deſolate place? Are you perſecuted and afflicted for Chriſt's ſake? What think you of their ſufferings, Heb. xi. 36, 37. "Who had trial of cruel mockings; yea, more-"over of bonds and impriſonments: they were ſtoned, they were "ſawn aſunder, were tempted, were ſlain with the ſword, they "wandered about in ſheep-ſkins and goat-ſkins, being deſtitute, "afflicted, tormented." And are you better than they? I know not what you are; but I am ſure, theſe were ſuch "of whom the "world was not worthy," ver. 38.

Or are your afflictions more ſpiritual and inward? Say not the Lord never dealt more bitterly with the ſoul of any, than he hath with yours. What think you of the caſe of David, Heman, Job, Aſaph, whoſe doleful cries, by reaſon of the terrors of the Almighty, are able to melt the ſtonieſt heart that reads their ſtories? the Almighty was a terror to them: the arrows of God were *within* them; they roared by reaſon of the diſquietneſs of their hearts.

Or are your afflictions outward and inward together; an afflicted ſoul in an afflicted body? Are you fallen, like the ſhip in which Paul ſailed, into a place where two ſeas meet? Well, ſo it was with

Digitized by Google

Paul, Job, and many other of thoſe worthies gone before you. Sure you may ſee many on earth who have been, and are in far lower and ſadder ſtates than yourſelves.

Or if not on earth, doubtleſs, you will yield there are many in hell, who would be glad to change conditions with you, as bad as you think yours to be. And were not all theſe moulded out of the ſame lump with you? Surely, if you can ſee any creature below you, eſpecially any reaſonable being, you have no reaſon to return ſo ungratefully upon your God, and accuſe your Maker of ſeverity; or charge God fooliſhly. Look down, and you ſhall ſee grounds enough to be quiet.

Thirdly, Look inward, you diſcontented ſpirits, and ſee if you can find nothing there to quiet you. Caſt your eye into your own hearts; conſider either the *corruptions* or the *graces* that are there. Cannot you find weeds enough there, that need ſuch winter-weather as this to rot them? Hath not that proud heart need enough of all this to humble it? That carnal heart need of ſuch things as theſe to mortify it? That backſliding, wandering heart need of all this to reduce and recover it to its God? "If need be, "ye are in heavineſs," 1 Pet. i. 6. O Chriſtian! didſt thou not ſee need of this before thou cameſt into trouble? Or hath not God ſhewn thee the need of it ſince thou waſt under the rod? It is much thou ſhouldeſt not ſee it; but be aſſured, if thou doſt not, thy God doth: he knows thou wouldeſt be ruined for ever, if he ſhould not take this courſe with thee.

Thy corruptions require all this to kill them. Thy luſts will take all this, it may be more than this, and all little enough. And as your corruptions call for it, ſo do your graces too. Wherefore think ye the Lord planted the principles of faith, humility, patience, &c. in your ſouls? What, were they put there for nothing? Did the Lord intend they ſhould lie ſleeping in their drowſy habits? Or were they not planted there in order to exerciſe? And how ſhall they be exerciſed without tribulations? Can you tell? Doth not "tribulation work patience, and patience experience, "and experience hope?" Rom. v. 3, 4. Is not "the trial of "your faith much more precious, than of gold which periſhes," 1 Pet. i. 7. O look inward, and you will be quiet.

Fourthly, Look outward, and ſee who ſtands by and obſerves your carriage under trouble. Are there not many eyes upon you? yea, many envious obſervers round about you. It was David's requeſt, Pſal. v. 8. "Lead me, O Lord, in thy righteouſneſs, becauſe of "mine enemies;" or, as the Hebrew word there might be rendered, becauſe of mine obſervers or watchers. There is many an envious eye upon you. To the wicked there can ſcarcely be an higher gratification and pleaſure, than to ſee your carriage under

Digitized by Google

trouble so like their own; for thereby they are confirmed in their prejudices against religion, and in their good opinion of themselves. These may talk and profess more than we; but when they are tried, and put to it, it appears plainly enough, their religion enables them to do no more than we do; they talk of heaven's glory, and their future expectances; but it is but talk, for it is apparent enough their hopes cannot balance a small affliction, with all the happiness they talk of. Oh, how do you dishonour Christ before his enemies, when you make them think all your religion lies in talking of it! Consider who looks on.

Fifthly, Look backward, and see if there be nothing behind you that may hush and quiet your impatient spirits: consult the multitude of experiences past and gone; both your own and others. Is this the first strait that ever you were in? If so, you have reason to be quiet, yet to bless God that hath spared you so long, when others have had their days filled up with sorrow. But if you have been in troubles formerly, and the Lord hath helped you; if you have past through the fire, and not been burnt; through the waters, and not drowned; if God hath stood by you, and hitherto helped you. O what cause have you to be quiet now, and patiently wait for the salvation of God! Did he help you then, and cannot he do so now? Did he give waters, and cannot he give bread also? Is he the God of the hills only, and not the God of the vallies also? O call to mind the days of old, the years of the right-hand of the Most High. "These things I call to mind, "therefore I have hope," Lam. iii. 21. Have you kept no records of past experiences? How ungrateful then have you been to your God, and how injurious to yourselves, if you have not read them over in such a day as this? for to that end were they given you.

O when you shall consider what a God he hath been to you, at a pinch; how faithfully *Jehovah-jireh* hath stood by you; that this is not the first time your hearts and hopes have been low, as well as your condition, and yet God hath raised you again; surely you will find your present troubles made light, by a glance back upon your past experiences.

Sixthly, Look forward, to the end of your troubles; yea, look to a double end of them, the end of their *duration*, and the end of their *operation*. Look ye to the end of their duration, and that is just by you: they shall not be everlasting troubles, if you be such as fear the Lord. "The God of all grace, who hath called us "unto his eternal glory by Jesus Christ, after that ye have [suffered a while] make you perfect," 1 Pet. v. 10. "These light afflictions are but for a moment," 2 Cor. iv. 18. They are no more comparatively, with that vast eternity that is before you.

Digitized by Google

Alas! what are a few days and nights of ſorrows, when they are paſt? Are they not ſwallowed up as a ſpoonful of water in the vaſt ocean? But more eſpecially look to *the end of their operation.* What do all theſe afflictions tend to and effect? Do they not work out an exceeding weight of glory? Are you not by them made "partakers of his holineſs?" Heb. xii. Is not this all the fruit to take away your ſins? What, and be impatient at this; fret and repine, becauſe God is, this way, perfecting your happineſs? O ungrateful ſoul! Is this a due requital of that love that diſdains not to ſtoop to ſo low an employment, as to ſcour and cleanſe your ſouls, that they might be ſhining veſſels of honour to all eternity?

O look forward to the end of your troubles: the end of their duration and operation.

Seventhly, Look to the right-hand, and ſee how you are ſhamed, convinced and ſilenced by other Chriſtians; and it may be ſuch too, as never made that profeſſion you have done; and yet can not only patiently bear the afflicting hand of God, but are bleſſing, praiſing, and admiring God under their troubles; whilſt you are ſinning againſt, and diſhonouring him under ſmaller ones. It may be you will find ſome poor Chriſtians that know not where to have their next bread, and yet are ſpeaking of the bounty of their God; while you are repining in the midſt of plenty. Ah! if there be any ingenuity in you, let this ſhame you. If this will not, then,

Eightly, Look to your left-hand, and there you will ſee a ſad ſight, and what one would think ſhould quiet you. There you may ſee a company of wicked, graceleſs wretches, carrying themſelves under their troubles, but too much like yourſelves. What do they more, than fret and murmur, deſpond and ſink; mix ſin with their afflictions, when the rod of God is upon them?

It is time for thee to leave off, when thou ſeeſt how near thou art come to them, whom thou hopeſt thou ſhalt never be ranked and numbered with. Reader, ſuch conſiderations as theſe, I am perſuaded, would be of ſingular uſe to thy ſoul at ſuch a time, but above all, thine eying the great pattern of patience, *Jeſus Chriſt;* whoſe Lamb-like carriage, under a trial, with which thine is not to be named the ſame day, is here recommended to thee. O how ſhould this transform thee into a lamb, for meekneſs alſo!

Digitized by Google

SERMON XXX.

Of the Inſtructiveneſs of the Death of CHRIST, in his ſeven laſt Words; the firſt of which is here illuſtrated.

LUKE xxiii. 34.

Then ſaid Jeſus, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.

THE manner in which Chriſt died hath already been opened in the *ſolitude* and *patience* in which he died. The third, to wit, the *inſtructiveneſs* of his death, now follows, in theſe ſeven excellent and weighty ſayings, which dropped from his bleſſed lips upon the tree, whilſt his ſacred blood dropped on the earth from his wounded hands and feet; ſo that on the croſs he exerciſed both his prieſtly and prophetical office together, redeeming us by his blood, and inſtructing us by his words.

Theſe ſeven words of Chriſt upon the croſs are his laſt words, with which he breathed out his ſoul. The laſt words of a dying man are remarkable; the ſcripture puts a remark upon them, 2 Sam. xxiii. 1. "Now theſe be the laſt words of David." How remarkable are the laſt words of Chriſt!

Theſe words are ſeven in number; three directed to his Father, and four more to thoſe about him. Of the former ſort this is one, *Father, forgive them, &c.* In which we have, *Firſt, The mercy deſired by Chriſt*, and that is forgiveneſs. *Secondly*, The perſons for whom it is deſired, [*Them,*] that is, thoſe cruel and wicked perſons that were now imbruing their hands in his blood. And, *Thirdly*, The motive or argument urged to procure that mercy from his Father, *for they know not what they do.*

Firſt, The mercy prayed for, that is, forgiveneſs; *Father, forgive.* Forgiveneſs is not only a mercy, a ſpiritual mercy, but one of the greateſt mercies a ſoul can obtain from God, without which, whatever elſe we have from God, is no mercy to us*. So great a mercy is forgiveneſs, that David calls him *Bleſſed*, or rather admires the bleſſedneſs of him, "whoſe tranſgreſſion is forgiven, "whoſe ſin is covered." This mercy, this beſt of mercies, he requeſts for them, *Father, forgive them.*

Secondly, The perſons for whom he requeſts forgiveneſs, are the ſame that with wicked hands crucified him. Their fact was the moſt horrid that ever was committed by men: they not only

* אשרי אדם—*Felicitas hominis*, i. e. O the happineſs of the man. *Montanus.*

Digitized by Google

ſhed innocent blood, but the blood of God; the beſt of mercies is by him deſired for the worſt of ſinners.

Thirdly, The motive or argument urged to procure this mercy for them, is this, *for they know not what they do.* As if he ſhould ſay, Lord, what theſe poor creatures do, is not ſo much out of malice to me as the Son of God; but it is from their ignorance. Did they know who, and what I am, they would rather be nailed to the croſs themſelves, than do it. To the ſame purpoſe the apoſtle ſaith, 1 Cor. ii. 8. "Whom none of the princes of this "world knew; for had they known it, they would not have cru- "cified the Lord of glory." Yet this is not to be extended to all that had an hand in the death of Chriſt, but to the ignorant multitude, among whom, ſome of God's elect were, who afterwards believed in him, whoſe blood they ſpilt, Acts iii. 17. "And now, "brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it." For them this prayer of Chriſt was heard. Hence the notes are,

Doct. 1. *That ignorance is the uſual cauſe of enmity to Chriſt.*

Doct. 2. *That there is forgiveneſs with God, for ſuch as oppoſe Chriſt through ignorance.*

Doct. 3. *That to forgive enemies, and beg forgiveneſs for them, is the true character and property of the Chriſtian ſpirit.*

Theſe obſervations contain ſo much practical truth, that it would be worth our time to open and apply them diſtinctly;

Doct. 1. *That ignorance is the uſual cauſe of enmity to Chriſt.*

"Theſe things (ſaith the Lord) will they do, becauſe they have "not known the Father, nor me," John xvi. 3. What thing doth he mean? Why, kill and deſtroy the people of God, and therein ſuppoſe they do God good ſervice, (i. e.) think to oblige and gratify the Father, by their butchering his children. So Jer. ix. 3. "They proceed from evil to evil; and have not known me, "ſaith the Lord," *q. d.* Had they the knowledge of God, this would check and ſtop them in their ways of wickedneſs? and ſo Pſal. lxxiv. 20. "The dark places of the earth are full of the ha- "bitations of cruelty."

Three things muſt be inquired into, *viz.* what their ignorance of Chriſt was. Whence it was. And how it diſpoſed them to ſuch enmity againſt him.

Firſt, What was their ignorance who crucified Chriſt? Igno-

Digitized by Google

rance is two-fold, *simple*, or *respective**. Simple ignorance is not supposable in these persons, for in many things they were a knowing people. But it was respective, particular ignorance, Rom. ix. 25. "Blindness in part is happened to Israel." They knew many other truths, but did not know Jesus Christ; in that their eyes were held. Natural light they had; yea, and scripture light they had; but in this particular, that *this was the Son of God*, the Saviour of the world, therein they were blind and ignorant.

But how could that be! Had they not heard at least of his miraculous works? Did they not see how his birth, life and death, squared with the prophecies, both in time, place, and manner? Whence should this their ignorance be when they saw, or at least might have seen, the scriptures fulfilled in him; and that he came among them in a time when they were big with expectations of the Messiah?

'Tis true, indeed, they knew the scriptures; and it cannot but be supposed the fame of his mighty works had reached their ears; But yet,

First, Though they had the scriptures among them, they misunderstood them; and did not rightly measure Christ by that right rule. You find, John vii. 52. how they reason with Nicodemus against Christ; "Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and see; for "out of Galilee ariseth no prophet." Here is a double mistake: *First*, They supposed Christ to arise out of Galilee, whereas he was of Bethlehem, though much conversant in the parts of Galilee: And, *Secondly*, They thought, because they could find no prophet had arisen out of Galilee, therefore none should.

Another mistake that blinded them about Christ, was from their conceit that Christ should not die, but live for ever, John xii. 34. "We have heard out of the law, that Christ abideth for ever: and "how sayest thou, the Son of man must be lifted up? who is the "Son of man?" That scripture which probably they urge against the mortality of Christ, is Isa. ix. 7. "Of the increase of his go- "government and peace, there shall be no end, upon the throne of "David," &c. In like manner, John vii. 27. we find them in another mistake; "We know this man whence he is; but when Christ "cometh, no man knoweth whence he is." This, likely, proceeded from their misunderstanding of Micah v. 2. "His goings "forth have been from of old, from everlasting." Thus were they blinded about the person of Christ, by misinterpretations of scripture-prophecies.

Secondly, Another thing occasioning their mistake of Christ, was the *outward meanness* and despicableness of his condition. They

* απλως, *vel* κατα τι.

Digitized by Google

expected a pompous Messiah, one that should come with state and glory, becoming the king of Israel. But when they saw him in the form of a servant, coming in poverty, not to be ministered unto, but to minister, they utterly rejected him: "We hid as it "were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed "him not," Isa. liii. 3. Nor is it any great wonder these should be scandalized at his poverty, when the disciples themselves had such carnal apprehensions of his kingdom, Mark x. 37, 38.

Thirdly, Add to this, *their implicit faith* in the learned rabbies and doctors, who utterly misled them in this matter, and greatly prejudiced them against Christ. "Lo, (said they) he speaketh "boldly, and they say nothing to him. Do the rulers know in-"deed that this is the very Christ?" They pinned their faith upon the rulers sleeves, and suffered them to carry it whither they would. This was their ignorance, and these its causes.

Thirdly, Let us see, in the next place, how this disposed them to such enmity against Christ. And this it doth three ways.

First, Ignorance disposes men to enmity and opposition to Christ, by removing those hinderances that would otherwise keep them from it; as checks and rebukes of conscience, by which they are restrained from evil; but conscience binding and reproving in the authority and virtue of the law of God, where that law is not known, there can be no reproofs; and therefore we truly say, That ignorance is virtually every sin,

Secondly, Ignorance enslaves and subjects the soul to the lusts of Satan; he is "the ruler of the darkness of this world, Eph. vi. 12. There is no work so base and vile, but an ignorant man will undertake it.

Thirdly, Nay, which is more, if a man be ignorant of Christ, his truths, or people, he will not only oppose, and persecute, but he will also do it conscientiously, i. e. he will look upon it as his duty so to do, John xvi. 3. Before the Lord opened Paul's eyes, "he "verily thought that he ought to do many things contrary to the "name of Christ." Thus you have a brief account what, and whence their ignorance was, and how it disposed and prepared them for this dreadful work. Hence we learn,

Inference 1. *How falsely is the gospel charged as the cause of discord and trouble in the world.* It is not light, but darkness, that makes men fierce and cruel: as light increases, so doth peace, Isa. xi. 6, 9. "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard lie "down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion, and the "fatling together; and a little child shall lead them; they shall "not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth "shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover "the sea." What a sad condition would the world be in without

Digitized by Google

goſpel-light! all places would be dens of rapine, and mountains of prey. Certainly we owe much of our civil liberty, and outward tranquillity to goſpel-light. If a ſword, or variance, at any time, follow the goſpel, it is but an accidental, not a direct and proper effect of it.

Inf. 2. *How dreadful is it to oppoſe Chriſt and his truths knowingly, and with open eyes?* Chriſt pleads their ignorance as an argument to procure their pardon. Paul *himſelf* was once filled with rage and madneſs againſt Chriſt and his truths: it was well for him that he did it ignorantly: had he gone againſt his light and knowledge, there had been little hope of him, 1 Tim. i. 13. "I was a blaſphe-"mer, a perſecutor, and injurious; but I obtained mercy, becauſe "I did it ignorantly, and in unbelief." I do not ſay, it is ſimply impoſſible for one that knowingly and maliciouſly oppoſes and perſecutes Chriſt and his people, to be forgiven, but it is not uſual, Heb. vi. 4, 5. There are few inſtances of it.

Inf. 3. *What an awful majeſty ſits upon the brow of holineſs, that few dare to oppoſe it that ſee it!* There are few or none ſo daringly wicked, to fight againſt it with open eyes; 1 Pet. iii. 13. "Who "will harm you whilſt ye are followers of that which is good;" *q. d.* who dare be ſo hardy to ſet upon known godlineſs, or afflict and wrong the known friends of it? The true reaſon why many Chriſtians ſpeed ſo bad, is not becauſe they are godly, but becauſe they do not manifeſt the power of godlineſs more than they do: their lives are ſo like the lives of others, that they are often miſtaken for others. Cyprian brings in the wicked of his time, thus ſcoffing at profeſſors, "behold, they that boaſt themſelves to be "redeemed from the tyranny of Satan, and to be dead to the "world, how are they overcome by the luſts of it, as well as other "men *:" Look as the poverty and meanneſs of Chriſt's outward condition was a ground of their miſtake of him then, ſo the poverty and meanneſs of our love to God, heavenly-mindedneſs, and mortification to this world, is a diſguiſe to profeſſors, and a cauſe why they are not more owned and honoured in the conſciences of men at this day. For holineſs, manifeſted in its power, is ſo awfully glorious, that the conſciences of the vileſt cannot but honour it, and do obeiſance to it, Mark vi. 20. "Herod feared "John, for he was a juſt man."

Inf. 4. *The enemies of Chriſt are objects of pity. Alas, they are blind, and know not what they do.* It is pity that any other affection than pity, ſhould ſtir in our hearts towards them. Were their eyes but open, they would never do as they do: we ſhould look

* *Ecce qui jactant ſe redemptos a tyrannide Sutanæ, qui prædicant ſe mortuos mundo; nihilominus cupiditatibus vincuntur.* Cyp.

Digitized by Google

upon them as the phyſician doth upon his ſick diſtempered patient*. Did they but ſee with the ſame light you do, they would be as far from hating Chriſt, or his ways, as you are, *Simul ac deſinunt ignorare, deſinunt odiſſe;* as ſoon as they ceaſe to be ignorant, they ceaſe to hate, ſaith Tertullian.

Inf. 5. *How needful is it before we engage ourſelves againſt any perſon or way, to be well ſatisfied and reſolved that it is a wicked perſon or practice that we oppoſe?* You ſee the world generally runs upon a miſtake in this matter. O beware of doing you know not what! for though you do you know not what, Satan knows what he is doing by you: he blinds your eyes, and then ſets you to work, knowing that if you ſhould but ſee what you are doing, you would rather die than do it: you may now do you know not what; but you may afterwards have time enough to reflect on, and lament what you have done: you may now do you know not what, and hereafter you may not know what to do. O beware what you now do!

Doct. 2. *That there is forgiveneſs with God, for ſuch as oppoſe Chriſt out of ignorance.*

If all manner of ſin and blaſphemy ſhall be forgiven to men, then this, as well as others, Mat. xii. 31. We are not, with Theophilact, to underſtand that place of the *certainty* of pardon; much leſs, with Origen, of the *deſert* of it; nor yet, with Janſenius, of the *facility* of it, but rather of the *poſſibility* of forgiveneſs: it ſhall be ſo to ſome; it may be ſo to you; even thoſe whoſe wicked hands had crucified Chriſt, may receive remiſſion by that blood they ſhed, Acts ii. 23, 38. compared.

I have two things here to do: *Firſt*, To open the nature of the forgiveneſs, and ſhew you what it is. *Secondly*, To evince the poſſibility of it, for ſuch as, miſtakingly, oppoſe Chriſt.

For the *Firſt*, *Forgiveneſs is God's gracious diſcharge of a believing penitent ſinner, from the guilt of all his ſin, for Chriſt's ſake.*

It is God's diſcharge: there is indeed *fraternal* forgiveneſs, by which one man forgives another; ſo far as he is intereſted in the wrong, Luke vi. 37. There is alſo a *miniſterial* forgiveneſs, whereby the miniſter of Chriſt, as his mouth, and in his name, declares the pardon, or miniſterially applies the promiſes of pardon to penitent offenders, John xx. 23. But none can abſolutely and properly forgive ſin, but God only, Mark ii. 7. The primary, and principal wrong is done to him; Pſal. li. 4. "Againſt thee,

* I met with many given to wine, luſt, and ingratitude, and many diſtracted with furious ambition; on all theſe the wiſe man will look with as much compaſſion as a phyſician does on his patient. *Seneca on Anger.*

Digitized by Google

"and thee only" (i. e.) thee mainly or especially, "have I sinned." Hence sins are *metonymically* called debts, debts to God, Mat. vi. 12. Not that we owe them to God, or ought to sin against him; but as pecuniary debts obliges him that owes it to the penalty, if he satisfy not for it; so do our sins. And who can discharge the debtor, but the creditor?

It is a gracious act to discharge. "I, even I, am he that blotteth "out thy transgression for mine own name sake," Isa. xliii. 25. And yet sin is not so forgiven, as that God expects no satisfaction at all; but as expecting none from us, because God hath provided a surety for us, from whom he is satisfied, Eph. i. 7. "In whom "we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, "according to the riches of his grace."

It is a gracious discharge from the guilt of sin. Guilt is that which pardon properly deals with. Guiltiness is an obligation to punishment. Pardon is the dissolving that obligation. Guilt is a chain with which sinners are bound and fettered by the law. Pardon is that *Aquafortis* that eats it asunder, and makes the prisoner a free man. The pardoned soul is a discharged soul, Rom. viii. 53. "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is "God that justifieth, who shall condemn? It is Christ that "died."

It is God's discharge of a believing penitent sinner. Infidelity and impenitency, are not only sins in themselves, but such sins as bind fast all other sins upon the soul. "By him, all that believe are justified from all things," Acts x. 43. So Acts iii. 19. "Repent "therefore, that your sins may be blotted out." This is the method in which God dispenseth pardon to sinners.

Lastly, *It is for Christ's sake* we are discharged; he is the meritorious cause of our remission. "As God, for Christ's sake, hath "forgiven you," Eph. iv. 32. It is his blood alone that meritoriously procures our discharge.

This is a brief and true account of the nature of forgiveness.

Secondly, Now to evince the possibility of forgiveness, for such as ignorantly oppose Christ, let these things be weighed:

First, Why should any poor soul, that is now humbled for its enmity to Christ in the days of ignorance, question the possibility of forgiveness, when this effect doth not exceed the power of the cause; nay, when there is more efficacy in the blood of Christ, the meritorious cause, than is in this effect of it? There is power enough in that blood, not only to pardon thy sins, but the sins of the whole world, were it actually applied, 1 John ii. 2. There is not only a sufficiency, but also a redundency of merit, in that precious blood. Surely then thy enmity to Christ, especially, be-

Digitized by Google

fore thou knoweſt him, may not look like an unpardonable iniquity in thine eyes.

Secondly, And as this ſin exceeds not the power of the meritorious cauſe of forgiveneſs; ſo neither is it any where excluded from pardon, by any word of God. Nay, ſuch is the extenſiveneſs of the promiſe to believing penitents, that this caſe is manifeſtly included, and forgiveneſs tendered to thee in the promiſes, Iſa. lv. 7. "Let the wicked forſake his way, and the unrighte-"ous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and "he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will abun-"dantly pardon." Many ſuch extenſive promiſes there are in the ſcriptures: and there is not one parentheſis in all theſe bleſſed pages, in which this caſe is excepted.

Thirdly, And 'tis yet more ſatisfactory; that God hath already actually forgiven ſuch [illegible] and that which he hath done, he may again do: yea, there[illegible] hath done it to ſome, and thoſe eminent for their enmity to Chriſt, that others may be encouraged to hope for the ſame mercy, when they alſo ſhall be, in the ſame manner, humbled for it. Take one famous inſtance of many; it is that of Paul in Tim. i. 13, 16. "Who was before a blaſphemer, "a perſecutor, and injurious. But I obtained mercy, becauſe I "did it ignorantly in unbelief.—Howbeit for this cauſe I obtained "mercy, that in me firſt Jeſus Chriſt might ſhew forth all long-ſuf-"fering, for a pattern to them which ſhould hereafter believe on "him to everlaſting life." It is no ſmall encouragement to a ſick man, to hear of ſome that have been recovered out of the ſame diſeaſe, and that prevailing in an higher degree than in himſelf.

Fourthly, Moreover, it is encouraging to conſider, That when God had cut off others in the way of their ſin, he hath hitherto ſpared thee. What ſpeaks this but a purpoſe of mercy to thy ſoul? Thou ſhouldſt account the long-ſuffering of God thy ſalvation, 2 Pet. iii. 15. Had he ſmitten thee in the way of thy ſin and enmity to Chriſt, what hope had remained! But in that he hath not only ſpared thee, but alſo given thee a heart ingenuouſly aſhamed, and humbled for thy evils: doth not this ſpeak mercy for thee; ſurely it looks like a gracious deſign of love to thy ſoul.

Inference 1. And is there forgiveneſs with God for ſuch as have been enemies to Chriſt, his truths, and goſpel? *Then certainly there is pardon and mercy for the friends of God, who involuntarily fall into ſin, by the ſurpriſals of temptation, and are broken for it, as ingenuous children for offending a good Father.* Can any doubt, if God have pardon for ſuch enemies, he hath none for children? If he have forgiveneſs for ſuch as ſhed the blood of Chriſt with wicked hands, hath he not much more mercy and forgiveneſs for ſuch as love Chriſt, and are more afflicted for their ſin againſt him,

Digitized by Google

than all other troubles they have in the world? Doubt it not, but he who receives *enemies* into his bosom, will much more receive and embrace *children*, though offending ones.

How pensive do the dear children of God sometimes sit, after their lapse into sin? Will God ever pardon this? will he be reconciled again? May I hope his face shall be to me, as in former times? Pensive soul! if thou didst but know the largeness, tenderness, freeness of that grace, which yearns over enemies, and hath given forth thousands, and ten thousands of pardons to the worst of sinners, thou wouldst not sink at that rate.

Inf. 2. Is there pardon with God for enemies? *How inexcuseable then are all they that persist and perish in their enmity to Christ!* sure their destruction is of themselves. Mercy is offered to them, if they will receive it, Isa. lv. 7. Proclamation is made in the gospel, that if there be any among the enemies of Christ, who repent of what they have been, and done against him, and are now unfeignedly willing to be reconciled, upon the word of a King, they shall find mercy: But "God shall wound the head of the enemies, and the hairy scalp of such a one as goeth on still in his trespasses," Psal. lxviii. 21. "If he turn not, he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow, and made it ready; he hath also prepared for him the instruments of death: He ordaineth his arrows against the persecutors," Psal. vii. 12.

This lays the blood of every man that perishes in his enmity to Christ, at his own door; and vindicates the righteousness of God, in the severest strokes of wrath upon them: This also will be a cutting thought to their hearts eternally: I might once have had pardon, and I refused it: the gospel trumpet sounded a parley: fair and gracious terms were offered, but I rejected them.

Inf. 3. Is there mercy with God and forgiveness, even for his worst enemies, upon their submission; *How unlike to God then are all implacable spirits!* Some there are that cannot bring their hearts to forgive an enemy; "to whom revenge is sweeter than life*." 1 Sam. xxiv. 16. "If a man find his enemy, will he let him go?" This is hell-fire, a fire that never goeth out. How little do such poor creatures consider, if God should deal by them, as they do by others, what words could express the misery of their condition! It is a sad sin, and a sad sign, a character of a wretched state, wherever it appears. Those that have found mercy, should be ready to shew mercy: and they that expect mercy themselves, should not deny it to others. This brings us upon the third and last observation, *viz.*

* *Est vindicta bonum vitæ jucundius ipsa.*

Digitized by Google

Doct. 3. *That to forgive enemies, and beg forgiveneſs for them, is the true character and property of the Chriſtian ſpirit.*

Thus did Chriſt: "Father forgive them." And thus did Stephen, in imitation of Chriſt, Acts vii. 59, 60. "And they ſtoned "Stephen, calling upon God, and ſaying, Lord Jeſus receive my "ſpirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, "Lord, lay not this ſin to their charge." This ſuits with the rule of Chriſt, Mat. v. 44, 45. "But I ſay unto you, love your ene- "mies; bleſs them that curſe you, do good to them that hate "you, and pray for them which deſpitefully uſe you and perſe- "cute you; that ye may be the children of God your Father "which is in heaven."

Here I ſhall firſt open the nature of this duty, and ſhew you what a forgiving ſpirit is; and then the excellency of it, how well it becomes all that call themſelves Chriſtians.

Firſt, Let us enquire what this Chriſtian forgiveneſs is. And that the nature of it may the better appear, I ſhall ſhew you both what it is not, and what it is.

Firſt, It conſiſts not in a *Stoical inſenſibility of wrongs and injuries.* God hath not made men as inſenſible, ſtupid blocks, that have no ſenſe or feeling of what is done to them. Nor hath he made a law inconſiſtent with their very natures that are to be governed by it: but allows us a tender ſenſe of natural evils, though he will not allow us to revenge them by moral evils: nay, the more deep and tender our reſentments of wrongs and injuries are, the more excellent is our forgiveneſs of them: ſo that a forgiving ſpirit doth not exclude ſenſe of injuries, but the ſenſe of injuries graces the forgiveneſs of them.

Secondly, Chriſtian forgiveneſs is not a *politic concealment of our wrath and revenge, becauſe it will be a reproach to diſcover it; or, becauſe we want opportunity to vent it.* This is carnal policy, not Chriſtian meekneſs. So far from being the mark of a gracious ſpirit, that it is apparently the ſign of a vile nature. It is not Chriſtianity to repoſe*, but depoſe injuries.

Thirdly, *Nor is it that moral virtue, for which we are beholden to an eaſier and better nature, and the help of moral rules and documents.* There are certain virtues attainable without the change of nature, which they call *homilitical virtues*, becauſe they greatly adorn and beautify nature; ſuch as temperance, patience, juſtice, &c. Theſe are of ſingular uſe to conſerve peace and order in the world: and without them, (as one aptly ſpeaks) the world would ſoon break

* *Manet alta mente repoſtum.* Virg. Eneid. lib. 1.
Deep graven in her heart the doom remain'd. *Dryden.*

Digitized by Google

up, and its civil societies disband. But yet, though these are the ornaments of nature, they do not argue the change of nature. All graces, in the exercises of them, involve a respect to God: And for the being of them, they are not by natural acquisition, but supernatural infusion,

Fourthly, and lastly, Christian forgiveness is *not an injurious giving up of our rights and properties to the lust of every one that hath a mind to invade them.* No; these we may lawfully defend and preserve, and are bound so to do; though, if we cannot defend them legally, we must not avenge our wrongs unchristianly: This is not Christian forgiveness. But, then positively,

It is a Christian lenity, or gentleness of mind, not retaining, but freely passing by the injuries done to us, in obedience to the command of God.

It is a lenity, or gentleness of mind. The grace of God demulces the angry stomach; calms the tumultuous passions; new-moulds our sour spirits, and makes them benign, gentle, and easy to be entreated; Gal. v. 22. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness," &c.

This gracious lenity *inclines the Christian to pass by injuries; so to pass them by, as neither to retain them revengefully in the mind, or requite them when we have opportunity with the hand:* Yea, and that freely, not by constraint, because we cannot avenge ourselves, but willingly. We abhor to do it when we can. So that as a carnal heart thinks revenge its glory, the gracious heart is content that forgiveness should be his glory. I will be even with him, saith nature: I will be above him, saith grace; it is his glory to pass over transgression, Prov. xix. 11.

And *this it doth in obedience to the command of God:* Their own nature inclines them another way. "The spirit that is in us lust-"eth to envy; but he giveth more grace," James iv. 5. It lusteth to revenge, but the fear of God represseth those motions. Such considerations as these God hath forbidden me; yea, and God hath forgiven me, as well as forbidden me: they prevail upon him, when nature urges to revenge the wrong. "Be kind one "to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God "for Christ's sake hath forgiven you," Eph. iv. 32. This is forgiveness in a Christian sense.

Secondly, And that this is excellent, and singularly becoming the profession of Christ, is evident; inasmuch as,

This speaks your religion excellent, that can mould your hearts into that heavenly frame, to which they are so averse, yea, contrarily disposed by nature. It is the glory of Pagan morality, that it can *abscondere vitia*, hide and cover men's lusts and passions. But the glory of Christianity lies in this, that it can *abscindere vitia*, not

Digitized by Google

hide, but deſtroy, and really mortify the luſts of nature. Would Chriſtians but live up to the excellent principles of their religion, Chriſtianity ſhall be no more out-vied by heatheniſh morality. The greateſt Chriſtian ſhall be no more challenged to imitate Socrates, if he can. We ſhall utterly ſpoil that proud boaſt, "that "the faith of Chriſtians is out-done by the infidelity of Hea"thens*." O Chriſtians, yield not to-day to Heathens! Let all the world ſee the true greatneſs, heavenlineſs, and excellency of our repreſented pattern; and by true mortification of your corrupt natures, enforce an acknowledgment from the world, that a greater than Socrates is here†. He that is really a meek, humble, patient, heavenly Chriſtian, wins this glory to his religion, that it can do more than all other principles and rules in the world. In nothing were the moſt accompliſhed Heathens more defective than this forgiving of injuries: It was a thing they could not underſtand, or, if they did, could never bring their hearts to it; witneſs that rule of their great Tully: "It is the firſt office of "juſtice, (ſaith he), to hurt no man, except firſt provoked by "an injury." The addition of that exception ſpoiled his excellent rule‡.

But now Chriſtianity teaches, and ſome Chriſtians have attained it, to receive evil, and return good, 1 Cor. iv. 12, 13. "Being "reviled, we bleſs; being perſecuted, we ſuffer it; being defamed, "we intreat." This certainly is that meekneſs wrought in us by the wiſdom that is from above, James iii. 17.

This makes a man ſit ſure in the conſciences of others, who, with Saul, muſt acknowledge, when they ſee themſelves ſo outdone, "Thou art more righteous than I," 1 Sam. xxiv. 16, 17. Had we been ſo much injured, and had ſuch opportunities to revenge them, we ſhould never have paſſed them by, as theſe men did.

This impreſſes and ſtamps the very image of God upon the creature, and makes us like our heavenly Father, who doth good to his enemies, and ſends down ſhowers of outward bleſſings upon them, that pour out floods of wickedneſs daily to provoke him, Mat. v. 44, 45. In a word, this Chriſtian temper of ſpirit gives a man the true poſſeſſion and enjoyment of himſelf. So that our breaſts ſhall be as the Pacific ſea, ſmooth and pleaſant, when others are as the raging ſea, foaming and caſting up mire and dirt.

---

* *Non præſtat fides, quod præſtitit infidelitas.* Cecilius ad Minucium.

† *Veritas Chriſtianorum pulchrior eſt Helena Græcorum.*

‡ On which rule Lactantius thus ſpeaks, "O what a ſimple and beautiful ſen"tence did he ſpoil by the addition of two words!"

Digitized by Google

Inference 1. Hence we clearly infer, *That the Chriſtian religion, exalted in its power, is the greateſt friend to the peace and tranquillity of ſtates and kingdoms.* Nothing is more oppoſite to the true Chriſtian ſpirit, than implacable fierceneſs, ſtrife, revenge, tumults and uproars. It teaches men to do good and receive evil: to receive evil, and return good. "The wiſdom that is from "above, is firſt pure, then peaceable, gentle, and eaſy to be in-"treated; full of mercy and good fruits; without partiality, and "without hypocriſy; and the fruit of righteouſneſs is ſown in peace "of them that make peace," James iii. 17, 18.

The church is a dove for meekneſs, Cant. vi. 9. When the world grows full of ſtrife, Chriſtians then grow weary of the world: and ſigh out the Pſalmiſt's requeſt, "O that I had the wings of "a dove! that I might fly away and be at reſt." Strigelius deſired to die, that he might be freed *ab implacabilibus odiis theologorum*, "from the implacable ſtrife of contending divines."

The rule by which they are to walk, is, "If it be poſſible, as "much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly be-"loved, avenge not yourſelves, but rather give place unto wrath; "for it is written, Vengeance is mine, I will repay it, ſaith the "Lord," Rom. xii. 18, 19. It is not religion, but luſts that make the world ſo unquiet, James iv. 1, 2. Not godlineſs, but wickedneſs, that makes men bite and devour one another. One of the firſt effects of the goſpel, is to civilize thoſe places where it comes, and ſettle order and peace among men. How great a miſtake and evil then is it to cry out, when atheiſm and irreligion have broken the civil peace; this is the fruit of religion! this is the effect of the goſpel! Happy would it be if religion did more obtain in all nations. It is the greateſt friend in the world to their tranquillity and proſperity.

Inf. 2. *How dangerous a thing is it to abuſe and wrong meek and forgiving Chriſtians?* Their patience and eaſineſs to forgive often invites injury, and encourages vile ſpirits to inſult and trample upon them: but if men would ſeriouſly conſider it, there is nothing in the world ſhould more ſcare and affright them from ſuch practices than this. You may abuſe and wrong them, they muſt not avenge themſelves, nor repay evil for evil: true, but becauſe they do not, the Lord will; even the Lord to whom they commit the matter; and he will do it to purpoſe, except ye repent.

"Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord," James v. 7. Will ye ſtand to that iſſue? had you rather indeed have to do with God than with men? When the Jews put Chriſt to death, "he committed himſelf to him that judgeth righteouſly," 1 Pet. ii. 22, 23. And did that people get any thing by that? did not the Lord ſeverely avenge the blood of Chriſt on them and

Digitized by Google

their children? yea, do not they and their children groan under the doleful effects of it to this day? If God undertakes, (as he always doth), the cauſe of his abuſed, meek and peaceable people, he will be ſure to avenge it ſeven-fold more than they could. His little finger will be heavier than their loins. You will get nothing by that.

Inf. 3. Laſtly, *Let us all imitate our pattern Chriſt, and labour for meek forgiving ſpirits.* I ſhall only propoſe two inducements to it: the *honour of Chriſt*, and *your own peace:* two dear things indeed to a Chriſtian. His glory is more than your life, and all that you enjoy in this world. O do not expoſe it to the ſcorn and deriſion of his enemies. Let them not ſay, How is Chriſt a lamb, when his followers are lions? how is the church a dove, that ſmites and ſcratches like a bird of prey? Conſult alſo the quiet of your own ſpirits. What is life worth, without the comfort of life? what comfort can you have in all that you do poſſeſs in the world, as long as you have not the poſſeſſion of your own ſouls? If your ſpirits be full of tumult and revenge, the ſpirit of Chriſt will grow a ſtranger to you: that dove delights in clean and quiet breaſts. O then imitate Chriſt in this excellency alſo!

SERMON XXXI.

The ſecond excellent Word of CHRIST upon the Croſs, illuſtrated.

JOHN xix. 27.

Then ſaith he to his diſciple, Behold thy mother.

WE now paſs to the conſideration of the ſecond memorable and inſtructive word of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt upon the croſs, contained in this ſcripture. Wherein he hath left us an excellent pattern for the diſcharge of our relative duties. It may be well ſaid, the goſpel makes the beſt huſbands and wives, the beſt parents and children, the beſt maſters and ſervants in the world; ſeeing it furniſhes them with the moſt excellent *precepts*, and propoſes the beſt *patterns*. Here we have the pattern of Jeſus Chriſt preſented to all gracious children for their imitation, teaching them how to acquit themſelves towards their parents, according to the laws of nature and grace. Chriſt was not only ſubject and obedient to his parents whilſt he lived, but manifeſted his tender care even whilſt he hanged in the torments of death upon the croſs. "Then "ſaith he to the diſciple, Behold thy mother."

Digitized by Google

The words contain an affectionate recommendation of his diſtreſſed mother to the care of a dear diſciple, a boſom friend; wherein let us conſider the deſign, manner, and ſeaſon of this recommendation.

Firſt, The deſign and end of it, which, doubtleſs, was to manifeſt his tender reſpect and care for his mother, who was now in a moſt diſtreſſed comfortleſs ſtate. For now was Simeon's prophecy, Luke ii. 35. fulfilled, in the trouble and anguiſh that filled her ſoul, yea, a ſword alſo ſhall pierce through thine own ſoul, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed. Her ſoul was pierced for him, both as ſhe was his mother, and as ſhe was a myſtical member of him, her head, her Lord: and therefore he commends her to the beloved diſciple that lay in his boſom, ſaying, "Behold thy mother," i. e. let her be to thee as thine own mother. Let thy love to me be now manifeſted in thy tender care for her.

Secondly, The manner of his recommending her, is both affectionate and mutual. It was very affectionate and moving, *Behold thy mother*, q. d. John, I am now dying, leaving all human ſociety and relations, and entering into a new ſtate, where neither the duties of natural relations are exerciſed, nor the pleaſures and comforts of them enjoyed. It is a ſtate of dominion over angels and men, not of ſubjection and obedience; this I now leave to thee. Upon thee do I devolve both the honour and duty of being in my ſtead and room to her, as to all dear and tender care over her.

John, "Behold thy mother;" and as it is affectionate, ſo it is mutual, ver. 26. And to his mother he ſaid, "Woman, behold "thy ſon;" not mother, but woman, intimating not only the change of ſtate and conditions with him, but alſo the requeſt he was making for her to the diſciple with whom ſhe was to live, as a mother with a ſon.

And all this he deſigns as a pattern to others.

Thirdly, The ſeaſon or time when his care for his mother ſo eminently manifeſted itſelf, was when his departure was at hand, and he could no longer be a comfort to her, by his bodily preſence; yea, his love and care then manifeſted themſelves, when he was full of anguiſh, to the very brim, both in his ſoul and body; yet all this makes him not in the leaſt unmindful of ſo dear a relation. Hence the doctrinal note is,

Doct. *That Chriſt's tender care of his mother, even in the time of his greateſt diſtreſs; is an excellent pattern for all gracious children to the end of the world.*

Digitized by Google

"There are three great foundations*, or bonds of relations, on "which all family government depends." Husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants. The Lord hath planted in the souls of men, affections suitable to these relations, and to his people he hath given grace to regulate those affections, appointed duties to exercise those graces, and seasons to discharge those duties. So that, as in the motion of a wheel every spoke takes its turn, and bears a stress; in like manner, in the whole round of a Christian's conversation, every affection, grace, and duty, at one season or other, comes to be exercised.

But yet grace hath not so far prevailed in the sanctification of any man's affections, but that there will be excesses or defects in the exercise of them towards our relations; yea, and in this the most eminent saints have been eminently defective. But the pattern I set before you this day, is a perfect pattern. As the church finds him the best of husbands, so to his parents he was the best of sons; "and being the best, and most perfect, is therefore the "rule and measure of all others†." Christ knew how those corruptions we draw from our parents are returned in their bitter fruits upon them again, to the wounding of their very hearts; and therefore it pleased him to commend obedience and love to parents, in his own example to us.

It was anciently a proverb among the heathen, *in sola Sparta, expedit senescere.* It is good to be an old man, or woman, only in Sparta. The ground of it was the strict laws that were among the Spartans, to punish the rebellions and disobedience of children to their aged parents. And shall it not be good to be an old father and mother in England, where the gospel of Christ is preached, and such an argument as this now set before you urged; an argument which the Heathen world was never acquainted with? Shall parents here be forced to complain with the eagle in the fable, that they are smitten to the heart, by an arrow winged with their own feathers? Or, as a tree cleft in pieces by the wedges that were made of its own body? God forbid.

To prevent such sad occasions of complaints as these, I desire all that sustain the relation of children, into whose hands providence shall cast this discourse, seriously to ponder this example of Christ, proposed for their imitation in this point. Wherein we shall first consider what duties belong to the relation of children: secondly, how Christ's example enforces those duties, and then suitably apply it.

First, Let us examine what duties pertain to the relation of

---

* Τρεις συζυξεις εξ ων οικια συνισταται. *Arist.*

† *Optimus in unoquoque genere est regula et mensura cæterorum.*

Digitized by Google

children: and they are as truly, as commonly, branched out into the following particulars.

First, Fear and reverence are due from children to their parents, by the expreſs command of God, Lev. xix. 3. Ye ſhall fear every man his mother and his father. The Holy Ghoſt purpoſely inverts the order, and puts the mother firſt, becauſe ſhe, by reaſon of her blandiſhments, and fond indulgence, is moſt ſubject to the irreverence and contempt of children. God hath clothed parents with his authority. They are intruſted by God with them, and are accountable to him for the ſouls and bodies of their children: and he expects that you reverence them, although, in reſpect of outward eſtate, or honour, you be never ſo much above them. Joſeph, though lord of Egypt, bowed down before his aged father, with his face to the earth, Gen. xlviii. 12. Solomon, the moſt magnificent and glorious king that ever ſwayed a ſceptre, when his mother came to ſpeak with him for Adonijah, he roſe up to meet her, and bowed himſelf to her, and cauſed a ſeat to be ſet up for the king's mother, and ſet her upon his right hand, 2 Kings ii. 19.

Secondly, Dear and tender love is due from children to their parents: and to ſhew how ſtrong and dear that love ought to be, it is joined with the love you have for your own lives; as it appears in that injunction, to deny both for Chriſt's ſake, Mat. x. 37. The bonds of nature are ſtrong and direct betwixt parents and children. What is the child, but a piece of the parent wrapped up in another ſkin? O the care, the coſt, the pity, the tenderneſs, the pains, the fears they have expreſſed for you. It is worſe than Heatheniſh ingratitude, not to return love for love. This filial love is not only in itſelf a duty, but ſhould be the root or ſpring of all your duties to them.

Thirdly, Obedience to their commands is due to them, by the Lord's ſtrict and ſpecial command, Eph. vi. 1. "Children obey "your parents in the Lord, for this is right; honour thy father "and thy mother, which is the firſt commandment with promiſe." Filial obedience is not only founded upon the poſitive law of God, but alſo upon the law of nature: for, though the ſubjection of children to parents is due to them by natural right; therefore, ſaith the apoſtle, *this is right*, (i. e.) right both according to natural and poſitive law. However, this ſubjection and obedience is not abſolute and univerſal. God has not diveſted himſelf of his own authority, to clothe a parent with it. Your obedience to them muſt be "in the Lord," i. e. in ſuch things as they require you to do in the Lord's authority. In things conſonant to that divine and holy will, to which they, as well as you, muſt be ſubject; and therein

Digitized by Google

you must obey them. Yea, even the wickedness of a parent exempts not from obedience, where his command is not so. Nor, on the other side, must the holiness of a parent sway you, where his commands and God's are opposite. In the former case, the Canonists* have determined, "that the command must be distinguished from the person." In the latter, it is a good rule, "My parents must be loved, but my God must be preferred."

Yield yourselves, therefore, chearfully to obey all that which they lawfully enjoin, and take heed of that black character fixed on the Heathens who know not God, be not found upon you, "disobedience to parents," Rom. i. 30. Remember, your disobedience to their just commands rises higher, much higher, than an affront to their personal authority; it is disobedience to God himself, whose commands second, and strengthen theirs upon you.

Fourthly, Submission to their discipline and rebukes, is also your duty, Heb. xii. 9. "We had fathers of our own flesh that corrected us, and we gave them reverence." Parents ought not to abuse their authority. "Cruelty† in them is a great sin, wrath "and rebellion in a child against his parents, is monstrous." It is storied of Elian, that having been abroad, at his return, his father asked him what he had learned since he went from him; he answered, you will know shortly; I have learned to bear your anger quietly, and submit to what you please to inflict. Two considerations should especially mould others to the like frame, especially to their godly parents. The *end* for which, and the *manner* in which they manifest their anger to their children. Their end is to save your souls from hell. They judge it better for you to hear the voice of their anger, than the terrible voice of the wrath of God: to feel their hand than his. They know, if you fall into the hands of the living God, you will be handled in another manner.

And for the manner in which they rebuke and chasten, it is with grief in their hearts, and tears in their eyes. Alas! it is no delight to them to cross, vex, or afflict you. Were it not mere conscience of their duty to God, and tender love to your souls, they would neither chide nor smite: and when they do, how do they afflict themselves in afflicting you! When their faces are full of anger, their bowels are full of compassion for you; and you have no more reason to blame them for what they do, than if they cry out and violently snatch at you, when they see you ready to fall from the top of a rock.

Fifthly, Faithfulness to all their interests is due to them, by the natural and positive law of God. What in you lies, you are bound

* *Officium a persona discernendum. Amandus genitor, sed præponendus Creator.*

† *Sævitia patris in filios grave peccatum, sed ira filii in patrem, grave crimen.*

Digitized by Google

to promote, not to waſte and ſcatter their ſubſtance: to *aſſiſt*, not to *defraud* them. Whoſo robbeth his father or mother, and ſaith it is no tranſgreſſion, the ſame is a companion of a deſtroyer, Prov. xxviii. 24. This, ſaith one, as far excels your wronging another, as parricide is a greater crime than man-ſlaughter, or as Reuben's inceſt was beyond common fornication. God never meant you ſhould grow up about your parents, as ſuckers about a tree, to impoveriſh the root*. But for a child, out of covetouſneſs after what his parents have, ſecretly to wiſh their death, is a ſin ſo monſtrous, as ſhould not be once named, much leſs found among perſons profeſſing Chriſtianity. To deſire their death, from whom you had your life is unnatural wickedneſs: to diſpoſe of their goods, much more of yourſelves, without their conſent, is (ordinarily) the greateſt injuſtice to them. Children are obliged to defend the eſtate and perſons of their parents with the hazard of their own. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man, ſo are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them. They ſhall not be aſhamed, but they ſhall ſpeak with the enemy in the gates. Pſal. cxxvii. 5.

Sixthly, And more eſpecially, *requital* of all that love, care, and pains they have been at for you, is your duty ſo far as God enables you, and thoſe things are requitable, 1 Tim. v. 4. "Let them "learn to ſhew piety at home, and requite their parents." The word is ἀντιτιθαργεῖν, and ſignifies to play the ſtork, to imitate that creature of whom it is ſaid, that the young do tenderly feed the old ones, when they are no longer able to fly abroad and provide for themſelves. Hence thoſe that want bowels of natural affection to their relations, are ſaid to be ἄστοργοι, Rom. i. 30. worſe than ſtorks. Oh, it is a ſhame that birds and beaſts ſhould ſhew more tenderneſs to their dams, than children to their parents.

It is a ſaying frequent among the Jews†, "A child ſhould rather "labour at the mill than ſuffer his parents to want‡." And to the ſame ſenſe is that other ſaying, "Your parents muſt be ſup-"plied by you if you have it; if not, you ought to beg for them, "rather than ſee them periſh." It was both the comfort and honour of Joſeph, that God made him an inſtrument of ſo much ſuccour and comfort to his aged father and diſtreſſed family, Gen. xlvii. 13. And you are alſo to know, that what you do for them, is not in the way of an alms, or common charity. For the apoſtle ſaith, it is but your requiting them, and that is juſtice, not charity. And it can never be a full requital. Indeed the apoſtle tells us,

* *Filius ante diem patrios inquirit in annos.* Ovid. Metam. lib. 1.
The ſon impatient enquires into his father's years.

† *Vel in piſtrino laborare filium debere, ut parentibus ſubveniat.*

‡ *Honorandi parentes ſi habes; ſi non habes, potius mendicandum.*

Digitized by Google

2 Cor. xii. 14. That parents lay up for their children, and not children for their parents, and so they ought; but, sure, if providence blast them, and bless you, an honourable maintenance is their due. Even Christ himself took care for his mother.

Secondly, You have had a brief account of the duties of this relation; next, let us consider how Christ's example, who was so subject to them in his life, Luke ii. 51. and so careful to provide at his death, enforces all those duties upon children, especially upon gracious children. And this it doth two ways, both as it hath the obliging power of a law; and as he himself will one day sit in judgment to take an account how we have imitated him in these things.

First, Christ's example in this hath the force and power of a law, yea, a law of love, or a law lovingly constraining you to an imitation of him. If Christ himself will be your pattern, if God will be pleased to take relations like yours, and go before you in the discharge of relative duties; Oh, how much are you obliged to imitate him, and tread in all his footsteps! This was by him intended as a precedent, or pattern, to facilitate and direct your duties.

Secondly, He will come to take an account how you have answered the pattern of obedience, and tender care he set before you in the days of his flesh. What will the disobedient plead in that day? He that heard the groans of an afflicted father or mother, will now come to reckon with the disobedient child for them; and, the glorious example of Christ's own obedience to, and tenderness of his relations, will, in that day, condemn and aggravate, silence and shame such wretched children as shall stand guilty before his bar.

Inference 1. Hath Jesus Christ given such a famous pattern of obedience and tenderness to parents? *Then there can be nothing of Christ in stubborn, rebellious, and careless children, that regard not the good or comfort of their parents.* The children of disobedience cannot be the children of God. If providence directs this to the hands of any that are so, my heart's desire and prayer for them is, that the Lord would search their souls by it, and discover their evils to them, whilst they shall read the following queries.

First Query, Have you not been guilty of slighting your parents by irreverent words or carriages; the old man or woman? To such I commend the consideration of that scripture, Prov. xxx. 17. which, methinks, should be to them as the hand-writing that appeared upon the plaister of the wall to Belteshazar. "The eye "that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, "the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles "shall eat it." That is, they shall be brought to an untimely

Digitized by Google

end, and the birds of the air ſhall eat that eye, that had never ſeen but for that parent that was deſpiſed by it.

It may be you are vigorous and young, they decayed and wrinkled with age: but, ſaith the Holy Ghoſt, "Deſpiſe not thy mo-"ther when ſhe is old," Prov. xxiii. 22. Or when ſhe is wrinkled, as the Hebrew ſignifies. It may be you are rich, they poor; own, and honour them in their poverty, and deſpiſe them not. God will requite it with his hand if you do.

Second Query, Have you not been diſobedient to the commands of parents? a ſon of Belial is a ſon of wrath, if God give not repentance to life. Is not this the black brand ſet upon the Heathens, Rom. i. 30. Have not many repented this upon a ladder, with a halter about their necks? Wo to him that makes a father or mother complain, as the tree in the fable, that they are cleft aſunder with the wedges that are cut out of their own bodies.

Third Query, Have you not riſen up rebelliouſly againſt, and hated your parents for chaſtening your bodies, to ſave your ſouls from hell? Some children (ſaith one) will not take that from a parent, which beaſts, yea, and ſavage beaſts too, bears and lions, will take from their keepers. What is this but to reſiſt an ordinance of God for your good? and, in rebelling againſt them, to rebel againſt the Lord? Well, if they do not, God will take the rod into his own hand, and him you ſhall not reſiſt.

Fourth Query, Have you not been unjuſt to your parents, and defrauded them? firſt, help to make them poor, and then deſpiſe them becauſe they are poor. O horrid wickedneſs! What a complicated evil is this! Thou art, in the language of the ſcripture, a companion with deſtroyers, Prov. xxviii. 24. This is the worſt of theft, in God's account. You may think you make bold with them, but how bold do you make with conſcience, and the command of God?

Fifth Query, Are you not, or have you not been ungrateful to parents? Leaving them to ſhift for themſelves, in thoſe ſtraits you have helped to bring them into. O conſider it, children, this is an evil which God will ſurely avenge, except ye repent. What! to be hardened againſt thine own fleſh! to be cruel to thine own parents, that with ſo much tenderneſs fed thee, when elſe thou hadſt periſhed! I remember Luther gives us a ſtory of one, (and oh that it might be a warning to all that hear it), who had made over all that he had to his ſon, reſerving only a maintenance for himſelf; at laſt his ſon deſpiſed him, and grudged him the very meat he eat; and one day the father coming in, when the ſon and his wife were at dinner upon a gooſe, they ſhuffled the meat under the table; but ſee the remarkable vengeance of God upon this ungracious, unnatural ſon: the gooſe was turned into a monſtrous

Digitized by Google

toad, which seized upon this vile wretch, and killed him. If any one of you be guilty of these evils, to humble you for them, and reclaim you from them, I desire these six considerations may be laid to heart.

First, That the effects of your obedience, or disobedience will stick upon you and yours to many generations. If you be obedient children in the Lord, both you and yours may reap the fruits of that your obedience, in multitudes of sweet mercies, for many generations. So runs the promise, Eph. vi. 22. "Honour thy father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise, that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth." You know what an eye of favour God cast upon the Recabites for this, Jer. xxxv. 8. from the 14th to the 20th verse: and as his blessings are, by promise, entailed on the obedient, so his curse upon the disobedient, Prov. xx. 20. "Whoso curseth his father or his mother, his lamp shall be put out in obscure darkness;" i. e. the lamp of his life quenched by death, yea, say others, and his soul also by the blackness of darkness in hell.

Secondly, Though other sins do, this sin seldom escapes exemplary punishment, even in this world. Our English history tells us of a yeoman in Leicester-shire, who had made over all he had to his son, to prefer him in marriage, reserving only a bare maintenance at his son's table: afterward, upon some discontent, the son bid his father get out of his house. The next day Mr Goodman, the minister of the parish, meeting the young man walking about his ground, asked him, How he did? He answered, Very well; but before the minister was gone far from him, his bowels fell out, which he carried in his hands, got to his house, sent for Mr Goodman, bitterly bewailed his sin against his father, and so died. And Dr Taylor, in his great examplar, tells us of another, that, upon discontent with his father, wished the house might be on fire, if ever he came any more into his father's house: afterwards, coming in, it was fired indeed, and this wicked son only consumed. I could multiply instances of this nature, (for indeed the righteous judgment of God hath multiplied them,) but this only for a taste.

Thirdly, Heathens will rise up in judgment against you, and condemn you. They never had such precepts nor precedents as you, and yet some of the better natured Heathens would rather chosen death, than to do as you do. You remember the story of Crœsus' dumb son, whose dear affections could make him speak when he saw Crœsus in danger; though he never spake before, yet then he could cry out, "O do not kill my father!" But what speak I of Heathens! the stork in the heavens, yea, the beasts of the earth, will condemn the disobedience of children.

Digitized by Google

Fourthly, These are sins inconsistent with the true fear of God, in whomsoever they are found. That a man is indeed, which he is in his family, and among his relations. He that is a bad child, can never be a good Christian. Either bring testimonies of your godliness from your relations, or it may be well suspected to be no better than counterfeit. Never talk of your obedience to God, whilst your disobedience to the just commands of your parents gives you the lie.

Fifthly, A parting time is coming when death will break up the family; and when that time comes, oh! how bitter will the remembrance of these things be! when you shall see a father or a mother lying by the wall, what a cut will it be to remember your miscarriages and evils! They are gone out of your reach, you cannot now, if you would, give them any satisfaction for what you have done against them; but, oh, how bitter will the remembrance of these things be at such a time! Surely, this will be more unsupportable to you than their death, if the Lord open your eyes, and give you repentance; and if not, then,

Sixthly, What a terrible thing will it be, to have a father or mother come in as witnesses against you at Christ's bar? As well as they loved you, and as dear as you were to them in this world, they must give evidence against you then. Now, what a fearful thing is it for you but to imagine your parents to come before the Lord, and say, Lord, I have given this child many hundred reproofs for sin; I have counselled, persuaded, and used all means to reclaim him, but in vain; he was a child of disobedience, nothing could work upon him: What think you of this?

Inf. 2. Have you such a pattern of obedience, and tender love to parents? Then, *Children, imitate your pattern, as it becomes Christians, and take Christ for your example.* Whatsoever your parents be, see that you carry it towards them becoming such as profess Christ.

First, If your parents be godly, O beware of grieving them by any unbecoming carriage. Art thou a Christian indeed? thou wilt then reckon thyself obliged in a double bond, both of grace and nature, to them: O what a mercy would some children esteem it, if they had parents that feared the Lord, as you have!

Secondly, If they be carnal, walk circumspectly, in the most precise and punctual discharge of your duties; for how knowest thou, O child, but hereby thou mayest win thy parents? Wouldst thou but humbly, and seriously intreat, and persuade them to mind the ways of holiness, speaking to them at fit seasons, with all imaginable humility and reverence, insinuating your advice to duties, or trouble for their evils, rather by relating some pertinent history, or proposing some excellent example, leaving their own

Digitized by Google

conſcience to draw the concluſion, and make application, than to do it yourſelves; it is poſſible they may ponder your words in their hearts, as Mary did Chriſt's, Luke ii. 49, 51. And would you but back all this with your earneſt cries to heaven for them, and your own daily example, that they may have nothing from yourſelves to retort upon you; and thus wait with patience for the deſired effect: O what bleſſed inſtruments might you be of their everlaſting good!

Inf. 3. To conclude, *Let thoſe that have ſuch children as fear the Lord, and endeavour to imitate Chriſt in thoſe duties, account them a ſingular treaſure and heritage from the Lord, and give them all due encouragement to their duties.*

How many have no children at all, but are as a dry tree! and how many have ſuch as are worſe than none? The very reproach and heart-breaking of their parents, that bring down their hoary heads with ſorrow to the grave.

If God have given you the bleſſing of godly children, you can never be ſufficiently ſenſible of, or thankful for ſuch a favour. O that ever God ſhould honour you to bring forth children for heaven! what a comfort muſt this be to you, whatever other troubles you meet with abroad, when you come home among godly relations, that are careful to ſweeten your own family to you by their obedience! eſpecially, what a comfort is it, when you come to die, that you leave them within the covenant, entitled to Chriſt, and ſo need not be anxious how it ſhall be with them when you are gone! Take heed of diſcouraging or damping ſuch children from whom ſo much glory is like to riſe to God, and ſo much comfort to yourſelves. Thus let Chriſt's pattern be improved, who went before you in ſuch eminent holineſs, in all his relations, and left you an example that you ſhould follow his ſteps.

SERMON XXXII.

The third of CHRIST's laſt Words upon the Croſs, illuſtrated.

LUKE xxiii. 43.

And Jeſus ſaid unto him, Verily I ſay unto thee, to-day thou ſhalt be with me in paradiſe.

IN this ſcripture you have the third excellent ſaying of Chriſt upon the croſs, expreſſing the riches of free grace to the penitent thief: a man that had ſpent his life in wickedneſs, and for

Digitized by Google

his wickedneſs was now to loſe his life. His practice had been vile and profane, but now his heart was broken for it; he proves a convert, yea, the firſt fruits of the blood of the croſs. In the former verſe he manifeſts his faith, "Lord, remember me, when "thou comeſt into thy kingdom." In this Chriſt manifeſts his pardon and gracious acceptance of him; "Verily I ſay unto thee, "to-day ſhalt thou be with me in paradiſe." In which promiſe are conſiderable, the matter of it, the perſon to whom it is made, the time ſet for its performance, and the confirmation of it for his full ſatisfaction.

Firſt, The matter or ſubſtance of the promiſe made by Chriſt, *viz.* That *he ſhall be with him in paradiſe*. By paradiſe he means heaven itſelf, which is here ſhadowed to us by a place of delight and pleaſure. This is the receptacle of gracious ſouls, when ſeparated from their bodies. And that paradiſe ſignifies heaven itſelf, and not a third place, as ſome of the fathers fondly imagine, is evident from 2 Cor. xii. 2, 4. where the apoſtle calls the ſame place by the names of the third heaven, and the paradiſe. This is the place of bleſſedneſs deſigned for the people of God. So you find, Rev. ii. 7. "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of "the tree of life, which is in the midſt of the paradiſe of God;" i. e. to have the fulleſt and moſt intimate communion with Jeſus Chriſt in heaven. And this is the ſubſtance of Chriſt's promiſe to the thief: Thou, i. e. thou in ſpirit, or thou in the nobleſt part, thy ſoul which here bears the image of the whole perſon; "Thou "ſhalt be with me in paradiſe."

Secondly, The perſon to whom Chriſt makes this excellent and glorious promiſe: it was to one that had lived lewdly and profanely; a very vile and wretched man, in all the former part of his time, and, for his wickedneſs, now juſtly under condemnation; yea, to one that had reviled Chriſt, after that ſentence was executed on him. However, now at laſt the Lord gave him a penitent believing heart. Now, almoſt at the laſt gaſp, he is ſoundly, in an extraordinary way converted; and, being converted, he owns and profeſſes Chriſt amidſt all the ſhame and reproach of his death; vindicates his innocency, and humbly ſupplicates for mercy; "Lord, remember me, when thou comeſt into thy kingdom."

Thirdly, The ſet time for the performance of this gracious promiſe: *To-day*, this very day, ſhalt thou be with me in glory: Not after the reſurrection, but immediately from the time of thy diſſolution, thou ſhalt enjoy bleſſedneſs. And here I cannot but detect the cheat of thoſe that deny an immediate ſtate of glory to believers after death; who, (to the end this ſcripture might not ſtand in full oppoſition to their, as uncomfortable, as unſound opinion),

Digitized by Google

loose the whole frame of it, by drawing one pin, yea, by transposing but a comma, putting it at the word *day*, which should be at the word *thee*; and so reading it thus, "Verily I say unto thee to-day," referring the word *day* to the time that Christ made the promise, and not to the time of its performance. But if such a liberty as this be yielded, what may not men make the scriptures speak? There can be no doubt, but Christ, in this expression, fixes the time for his happiness; "To-day thou shalt be with me."

Fourthly, and lastly, You have here the confirmation and seal of this most comfortable promise to him, with Christ's solemn asseveration; "Verily I say unto thee." Higher security cannot be given. I that am able to perform what I promise, and have not out-promised myself; for heaven and the glory thereof, are mine: I that am faithful and true to my promises, and have never forfeited my credit with any; I say it, I solemnly confirm it; "Verily I "say unto thee, to-day thou shalt be with me in paradise." Hence we have three plain obvious truths, for our instruction and consolation.

Doct. 1. *That there is a future eternal state, into which souls pass at death.*

Doct. 2. *That all believers are, at their death, immediately received into a state of glory and eternal happiness.*

Doct. 3. *That God may, though he seldom doth, prepare men for this glory, immediately before their dissolution by death.*

These are the useful truths resulting from this remarkable word of Christ to the penitent thief. We will consider and improve them in the order proposed.

Doct. 1. *That there is a future eternal state, into which souls pass at death.*

This is a principal foundation-stone to the hopes and happiness of souls. And seeing our hopes must needs be as their foundation and ground-work is, I shall briefly establish this truth by these five arguments. The being of a God evinces it. The scriptures of truth plainly reveal it. The consciences of all men have presentiments of it. The incarnation and death of Christ is but a vanity without it; and the immortality of human souls plainly discovers it.

Arg. 1. *The being of a God undeniably evinces a future state for human souls after this life.* For, if there be a God who rules the world which he hath made, he must rule it by rewards and punish-

Digitized by Google

ments, equally and righteously distributed to good and bad; putting a difference betwixt the obedient and disobedient, the righteous and the wicked. To make a species of creatures capable of a moral government, and not to rule them at all, is to make them in vain, and is inconsistent with his glory, which is the last end of all things. To rule them, but not suitably to their natures, consists not with that infinite wisdom from which their beings proceeded, and by which their workings are ruled and ordered. To rule them, in a way suitably to their natures, viz. by rewards and punishments, and not to perform, or execute them at all, is utterly incongruous with the veracity and truth of him that cannot lie: this were to impose the greatest cheat in the world upon men; and can never proceed from the holy and true God. So then, as he hath made a rational sort of creatures, capable of moral government by rewards and punishments; so he rules them in that way which is suitable to their natures, promising "it shall be well with "the righteous, and ill with the wicked." These promises and threatenings can be no cheat, merely intended to scare and fright, where there is no danger, or encourage, where there is no real benefit; but what he promises, or threatens, must be accomplished, and every word of God take place and be fulfilled. But it is evident that no such distinction is made by the providence of God (at least ordinarily and generally) in this life; but *all things come alike to all; and as with the righteous, so with the wicked.* Yea, here it goes ill with them that fear God; they are oppressed; they receive their evil things, and wicked men their good; therefore we conclude, the righteous Judge of the whole earth, will, in another world, recompense to every one according as his work shall be.

Arg. 2. *Secondly*, And as the very being of God evinces it, so *the scriptures of truth plainly reveal it.* These scriptures are the *pandect*, or *system* of the laws, for the government of man; which the wise and holy Ruler of the world hath enacted and ordained for that purpose. And in them we find promises made to the righteous, of a full reward for all their obedience, patience and sufferings in the next life or world to come; and threatenings, made against the wicked, of eternal wrath and anguish, as the just recompence of their sin in hell for ever, Rom. ii. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. "Thou treasurest up to thyself wrath against the day of wrath, "and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will "render to every man according to his deeds: to them who, by "patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, "and immortality, eternal life: but unto them that are contentious, and obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of "man that doeth evil, *&c.*" So 2 Thess. i. 4, 5, 6, 7. "So that

Digitized by Google

" we ourſelves glory in you, in the churches of God, for your pa-
" tience and faith in all your perſecutions and tribulations that ye
" endure: which is (a manifeſt token) of the righteous judgment
" of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of
" God, for which ye alſo ſuffer: ſeeing it is a righteous thing with
" God to recompenſe tribulation to them that trouble you: and
" to you who are troubled reſt with us, when the Lord Jeſus ſhall
" be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, *&c.*" To theſe plain teſtimonies, multitudes might be added, if it were needful. Heaven and earth ſhall paſs away, but theſe words ſhall never paſs away.

Arg. 3. *Thirdly*, As the ſcriptures reveal it, ſo *the conſciences of all men, have ſome preſentiments of it.* Where is the man whoſe conſcience never felt any impreſſions of hope, or fear, from a future world? If it is ſaid, theſe may be but the effects and force of diſcourſe, or education; we have read ſuch things in the ſcriptures, or have heard it by preachers; and ſo raiſe up to ourſelves hopes and fears about it. I demand, how the conſciences of the Heathens, who have neither ſcriptures nor preachers, came to be impreſt with theſe things? Doth not the apoſtle tell us, Rom. ii. 15. " That their conſciences in the mean while work upon theſe
" things?" their thoughts, with reference to a future ſtate, *accuſe*, or *elſe excuſe*, i. e. their hearts are cheared and encouraged by the good they do, and terrified with fears about the evils they commit. Whereas, if there were no ſuch things, conſcience would neither accuſe nor excuſe for good or evil done in this world.

Arg. 4. *Fourthly*, *The incarnation and death of Chriſt, are but a vanity without it.* What did he propoſe to himſelf, or what benefit have we by his coming, if there be no ſuch future ſtate? Did he take our nature, and ſuffer ſuch terrible things in it for nothing! If you ſay, Chriſtians have much comfort from it in this life: I anſwer, the comforts they have are raiſed by faith and expectation of the happineſs to be enjoyed, as the purchaſe of his blood, in heaven. And if there be no ſuch heaven to which they are appointed, no hell from which they are redeemed, they do but comfort themſelves with a fable, and bleſs themſelves with a thing of nought: their comfort is no greater than the comfort of a beggar, that dreams he is a king, and when he awakes, finds himſelf a beggar ſtill. Surely the ends of Chriſt's death were to deliver us from the wrath to come, 1 Theſſ. i. 10. not from an imaginary, but a real hell, to bring us to God, 1 Pet. iii. 18. to be the author of eternal ſalvation to them that obey him, Heb. v. 9.

Arg. 5. *Fifthly* and laſtly, *The immortality of human ſouls, puts it beyond all doubt.* The ſoul of man, vaſtly differs from that of a

Digitized by Google

beaſt, which is but a material form, and ſo wholly depending on, that it muſt need periſh with matter. But it is not ſo with us: Ours are reaſonable ſpirits, that can live and act in a ſeparated ſtate from the body, Eccleſ. iii. 21. "Who knoweth the ſpirit of man, "that goeth upward; and the ſpirit of a beaſt, that goeth down-"ward to the earth?" For if a man diſpute whether man be rational, this his very diſputing it proves him to be ſo: ſo our diſputes, hopes, fears, and apprehenſions of eternity, prove our ſouls immortal, and capable of that ſtate.

Inference 1. Is there an eternal ſtate, into which ſouls paſs after this life? *How precious then is preſent time, upon the improvement whereof that ſtate depends.* O what a huge weight hath God hanged upon a ſmall wire! God hath ſet us here in a ſtate of trial: "According as we improve theſe few hours, ſo will it fare with us "to all eternity*." Every day, every hour, nay, every moment of your preſent time hath an influence into your eternity. Do you believe this? What! and yet ſquander away precious time ſo careleſsly, ſo vainly! How do theſe things conſiſt? When Seneca heard one promiſe to ſpend a week with a friend that invited him, to recreate himſelf with him; he told him, he admired he ſhould make ſuch a raſh promiſe! What (ſaid he) caſt away ſo conſiderable a part of your life! How can you do it? Surely, our prodigality in the expence of time, argues we have but little ſenſe of great eternity.

Inference 2. *How rational are all the difficulties, and ſeverities of religion, which ſerve to promote and ſecure a future eternal happineſs?* So vaſt is the diſproportion betwixt time and eternity, things ſeen, and not ſeen as yet, the preſent vaniſhing, and future permanent ſtate, that he can never be juſtly reputed a wiſe man, that will not let go the beſt enjoyment he hath on earth, if it ſtand in the way of his eternal happineſs. Nor can that man ever eſcape the juſt cenſure of notorious folly, who, for the gratifying of his appetite and preſent accomodation of his fleſh, lets go an eternal glory in heaven. Darius repented heartily that he loſt a kingdom for a draught of water, O, ſaid he, "for how ſhort a pleaſure have I ſold a "kingdom!" It was Moſes' choice, and his choice argued his wiſdom; he choſe rather "to ſuffer afflictions with the people of "God, than to enjoy the pleaſures of ſin, which are but for a "ſeaſon," Heb. xi. 25. Men do not account him a fool, that will adventure a penny, upon a probability to gain ten thouſand pounds. But ſure the diſproportion betwixt time and eternity is much greater.

Inf. 3. If there certainly be ſuch an eternal ſtate into which ſouls

* *Ab hoc momento pendet æternitas.*

Digitized by Google

paſs immediately after death; *How great a change then doth death make upon every man and woman?* O what a ſerious thing is it to die! It is your paſſage out of the ſwift river of time, into the boundleſs and bottomleſs ocean of eternity. You that now converſe with ſenſible objects, with men and women like yourſelves, enter then into the world of ſpirits. You that now ſee the continual revolutions of days and nights, paſſing away one after another, will then be fixed in a perpetual NOW. O what a ſerious thing is death! You throw a caſt for eternity, when you die. If you were to caſt a dye for your natural life, O! how would your hand ſhake with fear, how it would fall! But what is that to this?

The ſouls of men are, as it were, aſleep now in their bodies; at death they awake, and find themſelves in the world of realities. Let this teach you, both how to carry yourſelves toward dying perſons when you viſit them; and to make every day ſome proviſion for that hour yourſelves. Be ſerious, be plain, be faithful with others that are ſtepping into eternity; be ſo with your own ſouls every day. O remember what a long word, what an amazing thing eternity is! eſpecially conſidering,

Doct. 2. *That all believers are, at their death, immediately received into a ſtate of glory and eternal happineſs.*

This day ſhalt thou be with me.

This the Atheiſt denies: He thinks he ſhall die, and therefore reſolves to live as the beaſts that periſh. Beryllus, and ſome others after him, taught, that there was indeed a future ſtate of happineſs and miſery for ſouls, but that they paſs not into it immediately upon death and ſeparation from the body, but ſhall ſleep till the reſurrection, and then awake and enter into it. But is not that ſoul aſleep, or worſe, that dreams of a ſleeping ſoul till the reſurrection? Are ſouls ſo wounded and prejudiced by their ſeparation from the body, that they cannot ſubſiſt or act ſeparate from it? Or have they found any ſuch conceit in the ſcriptures? Not at all. The ſcriptures take notice of no ſuch interval; but plainly enough denies it, 2 Cor. v. 8. "We are confident, I ſay, and "willing rather to be abſent from the body, and preſent with the "Lord." Mark it, no ſooner parted from the body, but preſent with the Lord. So Phil. i. 23. "I deſire to be diſſolved, and to "be with Chriſt, which is far better." If his ſoul was to ſleep till the reſurrection, how was it far better to be diſſolved, than to live? Sure Paul's ſtate in the body had been far better than his ſtate after death, if this were ſo; for here he enjoyed much ſweet

Digitized by Google

communion with God by faith, but then he should enjoy nothing.

To confirm this dream, they urge, John xiv. 3. "If I go away, "I will come again, and receive you to myself." As if the time of Christ's receiving his people to himself, should not come, until his second coming at the end of the world. But though he will then collect all believers into one body, and present them solemnly to his Father; yet that hinders not, but he may, as indeed he doth, receive every particular believing soul to himself at death, by the ministry of angels. And if not, how is it that when Christ comes to judgment, he is attended with ten thousand of his saints, that shall follow him when he comes from heaven? Jude 14. You see then the scripture puts no interval betwixt the dissolution of a saint, and his glorification: It speaks of the saints that are dead, as already with the Lord: And the wicked that are dead, as already in hell, calling them *spirits in prison*, 1 Pet. iii. 19, 20. assuring us, that Judas went presently to his *own place*, Acts i. 25. And to that sense, is the parable of Dives and Lazarus, Luke xvi. 22.

But let us weigh these four things more particularly, for our full satisfaction in this point.

Arg. 1. *First*, Why should the happiness of believers be deferred, since they are immediately capable of enjoying it, as soon as separated from the body? Alas, the soul is so far from being assisted by the body (as it is now) for the enjoyment of God; that it is either clogg'd or hinder'd by it: So speaks the apostle, 2 Cor. v. 6, 8. "Whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from "the Lord;" i. e. our bodies prejudice our souls, obstruct and hinder the fulness and freedom of their communion: When we part from the body, we go home to the Lord; then the soul is escaped as a bird out of a cage or snare. Here I am prevented by an excellent pen, * which hath judiciously opened this point: To whose excellent observations I only add this; That if the entanglements, snares, and prejudices of the soul are so great and many in its embodied estate, that it cannot so freely dilate itself, and take in the comforts of God by communion with him, then surely the laying aside of that clog, or the freeing of the soul from that burden, can be no bar to its greater happiness, which it enjoys in its separated state.

Arg. 2. *Secondly*, Why should the happiness and glory of the soul be deferred, unless God had some farther preparative work to do upon it, before it be fit to be admitted into glory? But, surely, there is no such work wrought upon it after its separation by

* Mr Shaw in his Farewell to Life.

Digitized by Google

death: all that is done of that kind, is done here. When the *compositum* is dissolved, all means, duties, and ordinances are ceased. The working day is then ended, and night comes, when no man can work, John ix. 3. To that purpose are those words of Solomon, Eccles. ix. 10. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it "with all thy might; for there is no wisdom, nor knowledge, nor "device in the grave whither thou goest." So that our glorification is not deferred, in order to our fuller preparation for glory. If we are not fit when we die, we can never be fit: all is done upon us that ever was intended to be done; for they are called, Heb. xii. 23. the spirits of the just made perfect.

Arg. 3. *Thirdly*, Again, Why should our salvation slumber, when the damnation of the wicked doth not slumber? God defers not their misery; and surely he will not defer our glory. If he be quick with his enemies, he will not be slow and dilatory with his friends. It cannot be imagined, but he is as much inclined to acts of favour to his children, as to acts of justice to his enemies; these are presently damned, Jude, ver. 7. Acts i. 25. 1 Pet. iii. 19, 20. And what reason why believers, yea, every believer, as well as this in the text, should not be, that very day in which they die, with Christ in glory?

Arg. 4. *Fourthly*, and *lastly*, How do such delays consist with Christ's ardent desires to have his people with him where he is, and with the vehement longings of their souls to be with Christ? You may see those reflected flames of love and desire of mutual enjoyment betwixt the bridegroom and his spouse in Rev. xxii. 17, 20. Delays make their hearts sick: the expectation and faith in which the saints die, is to be satisfied then; and surely God will not deceive them. I deny not but their glory will be more complete when the body, their absent friend, is re-united, and made to share with them in their happiness; yet that hinders not, but meanwhile the soul may enjoy its glory, whilst the body takes its rest, and sleeps in the dust.

Inference 1. Are believers immediately with God after their dissolution? *Then how surprizingly glorious will heaven be to believers!* Not that they are in it before they think of it, or are fitted for it; no, they have spent many thoughts upon it before, and been long preparing for it; but the *suddenness* and *greatness* of the change is amazing to our thoughts. For a soul to be now here in the body, conversing with men, living among sensible objects, and within a few moments to be with the Lord; this hour on earth, the next in the third heaven; now viewing this world, and anon standing among an innumerable company of angels, and the spirits of the just made perfect: O what a change is this! What! but wink, and see God! Commend thy soul to Christ, and be transferred in

Digitized by Google

the arms of angels into the invisible world, the world of spirits! To live as angels of God! To live without eating, drinking, sleeping! To be lifted up from a bed of sickness to a throne of glory! To leave a sinful, troublesome world, a sick and pained body, and be in a moment perfectly cured, and feel thyself perfectly well, and free from all troubles and distempers! You cannot think what this will be! Who can tell what sights, what apprehensions, what thoughts, what frames believing souls have, before the bodies they left are removed from the eyes of their dear surviving friends!

Inf. 2. Are believers immediately with God after their dissolution? *Where then shall the unbelievers be, and in what state will they find themselves immediately after death hath closed their eyes?* Ah! what will the case of them be that go the other way?

To be plucked out of house and body, from among friends and comforts, and thrust into endless miseries, into the dark vault of hell; never to see the light of this world any more; never to see a comfortable sight; never to hear a joyful sound; never to know the meaning of rest, peace, or delight any more. O what a change is here! To exchange the smiles and honours of men, for the frowns and fury of God; to be clothed with flames, and drink the pure unmixed wrath of God, who were but a few days since clothed in silks, and filled with the sweet of the creature! How is the state of things altered with them! It was the lamentable cry of poor Adrian, when he felt death approaching: "O my poor "wandering soul! alas! whither art thou going! Where must "thou lodge this night! Thou shalt never jest more, never be "merry more!"

Your term in your houses and bodies is out, and there is another habitation provided for you; but it is a dismal one! When a saint dies, heaven above is as it were moved to receive and entertain him; at his coming, he is received into everlasting habitations, into the inheritance of the saints in light. When an unbeliever dies, we may say of him, alluding to Isa. xiv. 9. "Hell from be-"neath is moved for him, to meet him at his coming; it stirreth "up the dead for him." No more sports, nor plays, nor cups of wine, nor beds of pleasure: the more of these you enjoyed here, the more intolerable will this change be to you. If saints are immediately with God, others must be immediately with Satan.

Inf. 3. *How little cause have they to fear death, who shall be with God so soon after their death?* Some there are that tremble at the thoughts of death; that cannot endure to hear its name mentioned; that would rather stoop to any misery here, yea, to any sin, than die, because they are afraid of the exchange. But you that

Digitized by Google

are interested in Christ, need not do so; you can lose nothing by the exchange: the words *Death*, *Grave*, and *Eternity*, should have another kind of sound in your ears, and make contrary impressions upon your hearts. If your earthly tabernacles cast you out, you shall not be found naked; you have "a building of God, an "house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens;" and it is but a step out of this into that. O what fair, sweet, and lovely thoughts should you have of that great and last change! But what speak I of your fearlessness of death? Your duty lies much higher than that far.

Inf. 3. *If believers are immediately with God, after their dissolution, then it is their duty to long for that dissolution, and cast many a longing look towards their graves.* So did *Paul*, *I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, which is far better.* The advantages of this exchange are unspeakable: You have gold for brass; wine for water; substance for shadow; solid glory for very vanity. Oh! if the dust of this earth were but once blown out of your eyes, that you might see the divine glory, how weary would you be to live? How willing to die? But then be sure your title be sound and good; leave not so great a concernment to the last; for, though it is confessed, God may do that in an hour, that never was done all your days, yet it is not common; which brings to our third and last observation.

Doct. 3. *That God may, though he seldom doth, prepare men for glory immediately before their dissolution by death.*

There is one *parable*, and no more, that speaks of some that were called at the last hour, Matt. xx. 9, 10. And there is this one instance in the text, and no more, that gives us an account of a person so called. We acknowledge God may do it, his grace is his own, he may dispense it how and where he pleaseth: we must always salve divine prerogative. Who shall fix bounds, or put limits to free grace, but God himself, whose it is? If he do not ordinarily shew such mercies to dying sinners (as indeed he doth not); yet it is not because he cannot, but because he will not; not because their hearts are so hardened by long custom in sin, that his grace cannot break them, but because he most justly withholds that grace from them. When blessed Mr Bilney, the martyr, heard a minister preaching thus: O thou old sinner, thou hast lain these fifty years rotting in thy sin, dost thou think now to be saved? That the blood of Christ shall save thee? O, said Mr Bilney, what preaching of Christ is this! If I had heard no other preaching than this, what had become of me? No, no, old sinners, or young sinners, great or small sinners, are not to be beaten

Digitized by Google

off from Christ, but encouraged to repentance and faith; for who knows but the bowels of mercy may yearn at last upon one that hath all along rejected it? This thief was as unlikely ever to receive mercy, but a few hours before he died, as any person in the world could be.

But surely this is no encouragement to neglect the present seasons of mercy, because God may shew mercy hereafter; or to neglect the ordinary, because God sometimes manifests his grace in ways extraordinary. Many, I know, have hardened themselves in ways of sin, by this example of mercy. But what God did at this time, for this man, cannot be expected to be done ordinarily for us; and the reasons thereof are:

Reason 1. *First*, Because God hath vouchsafed us the ordinary and standing means of grace, which this sinner had not; and therefore we cannot expect such extraordinary and unusual conversion as he had. This poor creature never heard in all likelihood, one Sermon preached by Christ, or any of his apostles: He lived the life of a highwayman, and concerned not himself about religion. But we have Christ preached freely, and constantly in our assemblies: We have line upon line, precept upon precept: And when God affords the ordinary preaching of the gospel, he doth not use to work wonders. When Israel was in the wilderness, then God gave them bread from heaven, and clave the rocks to give them drink; but when they came to Canaan, where they had the ordinary means of subsistence, the manna ceased.

Reason 2. *Secondly*, Such a conversion as this, may not be ordinarily expected by any man, because such a time as that will never come again: it is possible, if Christ were to die again, and thou to be crucified with him, thou mightest receive thy conversion in such a miraculous and extraordinary way; but Christ dies no more; such a day as that will never come again.

Mr Fenner, in his excellent discourse upon this point, tells us, That as this was an extraordinary time, Christ being now to be installed in his kingdom, and crowned with glory and honour; so extraordinary things were now done; as when kings are crowned, the streets are richly hanged, the conduits run with wine, great malefactors are then pardoned, for then they shew their munificence and bounty; it is the day of the gladness of their hearts. But let a man come at another time to the conduits, he shall find no wine, but ordinary water there. Let a man be in the jail at another time, and he may be hanged; yea, and have no reason but to expect and prepare for it. What Christ did now for this man, was at an extraordinary time.

Reason 3. *Thirdly*, Such a conversion as this may not ordinarily be expected; for as such a time will never come again, so there

Digitized by Google

will never be the like reaſon for ſuch a converſion any more: Chriſt converted him upon the croſs, to give an inſtance of his divine power at that time, when it was almoſt wholly clouded: Look, as in that day the divinity of Chriſt brake forth in ſeveral miracles, as the preternatural eclipſe of the ſun, the great earthquake, the rending of the rocks and vail of the temple; ſo in the converſion of this man in ſuch an extraordinary way, and all, to give evidence of the divinity of Chriſt, and prove him to be the Son of God whom they crucified; but that is now ſufficiently confirmed, and there will be no more occaſion for miracles to evidence it.

Reaſon 4. *Fourthly*, None hath reaſon to expect the like converſion, that enjoys the ordinary means; becauſe, though in this convert we have a pattern of what free grace can do, yet, as divines pertinently obſerve, it is a pattern without a promiſe; God hath not added any promiſe to it, that ever he will do it for any other; and where we have not a promiſe to encourage our hope, our hope can ſignify but little to us.

Inference 1. *Let thoſe that have found mercy in the evening of their life, admire the extraordinary grace that therein hath appeared to them.* O that ever God ſhould accept the bran, when Satan hath had the flour of thy days! The fore-mentioned reverend author tells us of one Marcus Caius Victorius, a very aged man in the primitive times, who was converted from Heatheniſm to Chriſtianity in his old age. This man came to Simplicianus, a miniſter, and told him, he heartily owned and embraced the Chriſtian faith. But neither he nor the church would truſt him for a long time; and the reaſon was, the unuſualneſs of a converſion at ſuch an age. But after he had given them good evidence of the reality thereof, there were acclamations and ſinging of Pſalms, the people every where crying, Marcus Caius Victorius is become a Chriſtian. This was written for a wonder! Oh! if God have wrought ſuch wonderous ſalvation for any of you, what cauſe have you to do more for him than others! What! to pluck you out of hell when one foot was in! To appear to you at laſt, when ſo hardened by long cuſtom in ſin, that one might ſay, "Can the Ethiopian change his "ſkin, or the leopard his ſpots?" Oh! what riches of mercy have appeared to you!

Inf. 2. *Let this convince and ſtartle ſuch, as even to their gray hairs, remain in an unconverted ſtate, who are where they were when they firſt came into the world, yea, rather further off by much.*

Bethink yourſelves, ye that are full of days, and full of ſin, whoſe time is almoſt done, and your great work not begun: who have but a few ſands more in the upper part of the glaſs to run down, and then your converſion will be impoſſible; your ſun is

Digitized by Google

ſetting; your night is coming; the ſhadows of the evening are ſtretched out upon you; you have one foot in the grave, and the other in hell. O think, if all ſenſe and tenderneſs be not withered up as well as natural verdure; think with yourſelves how ſad a caſe you are in: God may do wonders, but they are not ſeen every day, then they would ceaſe to be wondered at. O ſtrive, ſtrive, while you have a little time, and a few helps and means more; ſtrive to get that work accompliſhed now that was never done yet; defer it no longer, you have done ſo too much already.

It may be (to uſe *Seneca's expreſſion) you have been theſe ſixty, ſeventy, or eighty years, beginning to live, about to change your practice; but hitherto you ſtill continue the ſame. Do not you ſee how Satan hath gulled, and cheated you with vain purpoſes, till he hath brought you to the very brink of the grave and hell? O it is time now to make a ſtand, and pauſe a little where you are, and to what he hath brought you. The Lord at laſt give you an eye to ſee, and an heart to conſider.

Inf. 3. Laſtly, *Let this be a call and caution to all young ones to begin with God betime, and take heed of delays till the laſt, ſo as many thouſands have done before them to their eternal ruin.* Now is your time, if you deſire to be in Chriſt; if you have any ſenſe of the weight and worth of eternal things upon your hearts: I know your age is voluptuous, and delights not in the ſerious thoughts of death and eternity: you are more inclined to mind your pleaſures, and leave theſe grave and ſerious matters to old age: but let me perſuade you againſt that, by theſe conſiderations.

Firſt, O ſet to the buſineſs of religion now, becauſe *this is the moulding age.* Now your hearts are tender, and your affections flowing: now is the time when you are moſt likely to be wrought upon,

Secondly, Now, becauſe this is *the freeſt part of your time.* It is in the morning of your life, as in the morning of the day: if a man have any buſineſs to be done, let him take the morning for it; for, in the after-part of the day a hurry of buſineſs comes on, ſo that you either forget it, or want opportunity for it.

Thirdly, Now, becauſe *your life is immediately uncertain*; you are not certain that ever you ſhall attain the years of your fathers: there are graves in the church-yard juſt of your length; and ſkulls of all ſorts and ſizes in Golgotha, as the Jews proverb is.

Fourthly, Now, *becauſe God will not ſpare you becauſe you are but young ſinners, little ſinners, if you die Chriſtleſs.* If you are not, as you think, old enough to mind Chriſt, ſurely, if you die

* *Semper victuri.* Always about to live.

Digitized by Google

Chriſtleſs, you are old enough to be damned: there is the ſmall ſpray, as well as great logs in the fire of hell.

Fifthly, Now, becauſe *your life will be the more eminently uſeful, and ſerviceable to God, when you know him betimes, and begin with him early.* Auſtin repented, and ſo have many thouſands ſince, that he began ſo late, and knew God no ſooner.

Sixthly, Now, becauſe *your life will be the ſweeter to you, when the morning of it is dedicated to the Lord.* The firſt fruits ſanctify the whole harveſt: this will have a ſweet influence into all your days, whatever changes, ſtraits, or troubles you may afterwards meet with.

SERMON XXXIII.

The fourth excellent Saying of CHRIST upon the Croſs, illuſtrated.

MATTH. xxvii. 46.

And about the ninth hour Jeſus cried with a loud voice, ſaying, Eli, Eli, lama ſabachthani; *that is to ſay, My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?*

THIS verſe contains the fourth memorable ſaying of Chriſt upon the croſs; words able to rend the hardeſt heart in the world: it is the voice of the Son of God in an agony*: his ſufferings were great, very great before, but never in that extremity as now; when this heaven-rending and heart-melting out-cry brake from him upon the croſs, *Eli, Eli, lama ſabachthani?* In which are conſiderable, the time, matter, and manner of this his ſad complaint.

Firſt, The time when it was uttered, "about the ninth hour," i. e. about three of the clock after noon. For as the Jews divided the night into four quarters, or watches; ſo they divided the day, in like manner, into four quarters, or greater hours; which had their names from that hour of the day that cloſed the quarter. So that beginning their account of their leſſer hours from ſix in the morning, which with them was the firſt, their ninth hour anſwered to our third afternoon. And this is heedfully marked by the evangeliſts, on purpoſe to ſhew us how long Chriſt hanged in diſtreſs upon the croſs, both in ſoul and body, which at leaſt was full

* I know theſe are the words of one in agony, and in the utmoſt anguiſh of ſoul. *Heinſius on this place.*

Digitized by Google

three hours: towards the end whereof his soul was so filled, distressed, and overwhelmed, that this doleful cry brake from his soul, in bitter anguish, "My God, my God," &c.

Secondly, The matter of the complaint. It is not of the cruel tortures he felt in his body, nor of the scoffs and reproaches of his name; he mentions not a word of these, they were all swallowed up in the sufferings within, as the river is swallowed up in the sea, or the lesser flame in the greater. He seems to neglect all these, and only complains of what was more burdensome than ten thousand crosses; even his Father's deserting him, "My God, my "God, why hast thou forsaken me?" It is a more inward trouble that burdens him, darkness upon his spirit, the hidings of God's face from him, an affliction he was totally a stranger to till now; here he lays his hand in this complaint. This was the pained place, to which he points in this dolorous outcry.

Thirdly, The manner in which he utters his sad complaint, and that was with a remarkable vehemency, "he cried with a loud "voice," not like a dying man, in whom nature was spent, but as one full of vigour, life, and sense. He gathered all his spirits together, stirred up the whole power of nature, when he made this grievous outcry. There is in it also an *emphatical reduplication*, which shews with what vehemency it was uttered; not singly, my God, but he doubles it, "My God, my God," as distressed persons use to do. So Elisha, when Elijah was separated from him by the chariots and horses of fire, cries out, "My father, my father."

Nay, moreover, to increase the force and vehemency of this complaint, here is an affectionate interrogation, "Why hast thou "forsaken me?" Questions, especially such as this, are full of spirits. It is as if he were surprised by the strangeness of this affliction: and rousing up himself with an unusual vehemency, turns himself to the Father, and cries, Why so, my Father? O what dost thou mean by this! What! hide that face from me that was never hid before! What! and hide it from me now, in the depth of my other torments and troubles! O what new, what strange things are these! Lastly, here is an observable variation of the language in which this astonishing complaint was uttered; for he speaks both Hebrew and Syriac in one breath, *Eli, Eli, lama*, are all Hebrew, *sabachthani* is a Syriac word, used here for emphasis sake. Hence we observe,

Doct. *That God in design to heighten the sufferings of Christ to the uttermost, forsook him in the time of his greatest distress; to the unspeakable affliction and anguish of his soul.*

This proposition shall be considered in three parts: The *desertion*

Digitized by Google

itſelf; the *deſign* or end of it; the *effect* and influence it had on Chriſt.

Firſt, The deſertion itſelf. Divine deſertion generally conſidered, is God's withdrawing himſelf from any, not as to his eſſence, that fills heaven and earth, and conſtantly remains the ſame; but it is the withdrawment of his favour, grace, and love: when theſe are gone, God is ſaid to be gone. And this is done two ways, either abſolutely, and wholly, or reſpectively, and only as to manifeſtation. In the firſt ſenſe, devils are forſaken of God. They once were in his favour and love, but they have utterly and finally loſt it. God is ſo withdrawn from them, as that he will never take them into favour any more. In the other ſenſe he ſometimes forſakes his deareſt children, i. e. he removes all ſweet manifeſtations of his favour and love for a time, and carries it to them as a ſtranger, though his love be ſtill the ſame.

And this kind of deſertion, which is reſpective, temporary, and only in regard of manifeſtation, is juſtly diſtinguiſhed from the various ends and deſigns of it, into *probational*, *cautional*, *caſtigatory*, and *penal*. *Probational* deſertions are only for the proof and trial of grace. *Cautional* deſertions are deſigned to prevent ſin. *Caſtigatory* deſertions are God's rods to chaſtiſe his people for ſin. *Penal* deſertions are ſuch as are inflicted as the juſt reward of ſin, for the reparation of that wrong ſinners have done by their ſins. Of this ſort was Chriſt's deſertion. A part of the curſe, and a ſpecial part. And his bearing it was no ſmall part of the reparation, or ſatisfaction he made for our ſins.

More particularly, to open the nature of this deſertion of Chriſt by his Father, there being much of intricacy and difficulty in it; I ſhall proceed in the explication of it *negatively*, and *poſitively*.

Firſt, *Negatively*. When Chriſt cries out of God's forſaking him, he doth not mean, that he had *diſſolved the perſonal union* of the two natures. Not as if the marriage-knot which united our nature to the perſon of Chriſt was looſed, or a divorſe made betwixt them: No, for when he was forſaken of God, he was ſtill true and real *God-man* in one perſon.

Secondly, When Chriſt bewails the Father's forſaking him, he doth not mean, that he *pulled away the prop of divine ſupport* from him, by which he had till then endured the tortures and ſufferings that oppreſſed him: no, though the Father deſerted, yet he ſtill ſupported him. And ſo much is intimated in theſe words of Chriſt, *Eli*, *Eli*, which ſignifies my ſtrong One, my ſtrong One. God was with him by way of ſupport, when withdrawn as to manifeſtations of love and favour. In reſpect of God's ſupporting preſence which was with Chriſt at this time, it is ſaid, Iſa. xlii. 1. "Behold my ſervant, whom I uphold:" and John xvi. 32.

Digitized by Google

"I am not alone, but my father is with me." So that this cannot be the meaning of it.

Thirdly, Much less is it his meaning, *that God had left him, as to inherent grace and sanctification;* recalling that spirit of holiness which had anointed him above his fellows: no, when he was forsaken, he remained as holy as ever: he had indeed less comfort, but not less holiness than before. Such a desertion had irritated and made void the very end of his death. And his sacrifice could never have yielded such a fragrant odour to God as it did, Eph. v. 2.

Fourthly, The love of God was not so withdrawn from Christ, as that *the Father had now no love for him*, nor delight in him. That is impossible, he can no more cease to love Christ, than to love himself. His love was not turned into wrath; though his wrath only was now manifested to him as our surety; and hid his love from him, as his beloved Son.

Fifthly, Nor was Christ *forsaken by his Father finally*, upon what account soever it was that he was forsaken: no, it was but for a few hours that the dark cloud dwelt upon his soul; it soon passed away, and the bright and glorious face of God shone forth again as bright as ever, Psal. xxii. 1, 24. compared.

Sixthly, and lastly, It was *not a mutual desertion*, or a desertion on both parts; the Father forsook him, but he forsook not his Father. When God withdrew, he followed him, crying, "My "God, my God."

Yet to speak positively of it; though he did not dissolve the personal union, nor cut off divine supports, nor remove his inherent grace, nor turn his Father's love into hatred, nor continue for ever, nor yet was it on both parts, Christ's forsaking God, as well as God's forsaking Christ: yet I say it was,

First, *A very sad desertion*, the like unto which in all respects never was experienced by any, nor can be to the end of the world. All his other sufferings were but small to this; they bore upon his body, this upon his soul; they came from the hands of vile men, this from the hands of a dear Father. He suffered both in body and soul; but the sufferings of his soul were the very soul of his sufferings. Under all his other sufferings he opened not his mouth; but this touched the quick, that he could not but cry out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Secondly, As it was sad, so *it was a penal desertion*, inflicted on him for satisfaction for those sins of ours, which deserved that God should forsake us for ever, as the damned are forsaken by him. So that this cry (as one observes) was like the *perpetual shriek* of them that are cast away for ever: this was that hell, and the torments

Digitized by Google

of it, which Christ, our surety, suffered for us. For look, as there lies a twofold misery upon the damned in hell, viz. *pain of sense*, and *pain of loss*; so upon Christ answerably, *there was not only an impression of wrath, but also a subtraction or withdrawment of all sensible favour and love.* Hence it is said by himself, John xii. 27. And now my soul, τετάρακται, is troubled. The word signifies, troubled as they they that are in hell are troubled. Though God did not leave his soul in hell, as others are, he having enough to pay the debt which they have not, yet in the torments thereof, at this time, he was; yea, his sufferings at this time in his soul were equivalent to all that which our souls should have suffered there to all eternity.

*Thirdly, It was a desertion that was real, and not fictitious**. He doth not personate a deserted soul, and speak as if God had withdrawn the comfortable sense and influence of his love from him; but the thing was so indeed. The Godhead restrained and kept back, for this time, all its joys, comforts, and sense of love from the manhood, yielding it nothing but support. This bitter doleful outcry of Christ gives evidence enough of the reality of it: he did not *feign*, but *feel* the burdensomeness of it.

Fourthly, This desertion fell out in the time of Christ's greatest need of comfort that ever he had in all the time of his life on earth. His Father forsook him at that time, when all earthly comforts had forsaken him, and all outward evils had broken in together upon him; when men, yea, the best of men stood afar off, and none but barbarous enemies were about him. When pains and shame, and all miseries even weighed him down; then, even then, to complete and fill up his sufferings, God stands afar off too.

Fifthly, and *lastly, It was such a desertion as left him only to the supports of his faith.* He had nothing else now but his Father's covenant and promise to hang upon. And indeed, as a judicious author † pertinently observes, the faith of Christ did several ways act and manifest itself, in these very words of complaint in the text.

For though all comfortable sights of God and sense of love were obstructed, yet you see his soul *cleaves fiducially to God for all that: My God*, &c. Though sense and feeling speak as well as faith, yet *faith speaks first, My God*, before sense speaks a word of his forsaking. His faith prevented the complaint of sense; and though sense comes in afterwards with a word of complaint, yet here are two words of faith to one of sense: it is, "My God, my God," and

* It is not in a fictitious and theatrical manner, that he laments his being deserted of the Father; and what some maintain, that he spoke thus, according to the opinion of the vulgar, is a foolish cavil. *Calvin.*

† Mr Case's Correction, instruction, p. 51, 52.

Digitized by Google

but one word of forſaking. As his faith ſpake firſt, ſo it ſpake twice, when ſenſe and feeling ſpake but once: yea, and as faith ſpake firſt, and twice as much as ſenſe, ſo it ſpake more confidently than ſenſe did. He lays a confident claim to God as his God; "My God, my God," and only queries about his forſaking of him, "Why haſt thou forſaken me?" This is ſpoken more dubiouſly, the former more confidently.

To be ſhort, his faith laid hold on God, under a moſt ſuitable title, or attribute, *Eli, Eli,* "my ſtrong One, my ſtrong One," *q. d.* O thou, with whom is infinite and everlaſting ſtrength; thou that haſt hitherto ſupported my manhood, and according to thy promiſe upheld thy ſervant; what! wilt thou now forſake me? My ſtrong One, I lean upon thee. To theſe ſupports and refuges of faith this deſertion ſhut up Chriſt: by theſe things he ſtood, when all other viſible and ſenſible comforts ſhrunk away, both from his ſoul and body. This is the true, though brief account of the nature and quality of Chriſt's deſertion.

Secondly, In the next place, let us conſider the deſigns and ends of it; which were principally *ſatisfaction* and *ſanctification:* Satisfaction for thoſe ſins of ours which deſerved that we ſhould be totally and everlaſtingly forſaken of God. This is the deſert of every ſin, and the damned do feel it, and ſhall to all eternity: God is gone from them for ever, not eſſentially; the juſt God is with them ſtill, the God of power is ſtill with them, the avenging God is ever with them; but the merciful God is gone, and gone for ever. And thus would he have withdrawn himſelf from every ſoul that ſinned, had not Chriſt borne that puniſhment for us in his own ſoul: If he had not cried, "My God, my God, why haſt thou "forſaken me?" we muſt have howled out this hideous complaint in the loweſt hell for ever, O righteous God! O dreadful! O terrible God! thou haſt for ever forſaken me!

And as ſatisfaction was deſigned in this deſertion of Chriſt, ſo alſo was the ſanctification of all the deſertions of the ſaints deſigned in it. For he having been forſaken before us, and for us, whenever God forſakes us, that very forſaking of his is ſanctified, and thereby turned into a mercy to believers. Hence are all the precious fruits and effects of our deſertions: ſuch are the earneſt excitations of the ſoul to prayer, Pſal. lxxvii. 2. Pſal. lxxxviii. 1, 9. The antidoting the tempted ſoul againſt ſin. The reviving of ancient experiences, Pſal. lxxvii. 5. Enhancing the value of the divine preſence with the ſoul, and teaching it to hold Chriſt faſter than ever before, Cant. iii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Theſe, and many more, are the precious effects of ſanctified deſertion; but how many, or how good ſoever theſe effects are, they all owe themſelves to Jeſus Chriſt, as the author of them; who, for our ſakes, would paſs

Digitized by Google

through this ſad and dark ſtate, that we might find thoſe bleſſings in it. So then, the Godhead's ſuſpending of all the effects of joy and comfort from the humanity of Chriſt at this time, which had not ceaſed to flow into it, in an ineffable meaſure and manner, till now, muſt needs be both a ſpecial part of Chriſt's ſatisfaction for us, and, conſequently, that which makes all our temporary deſertions rather mercies and bleſſings, than curſes to us.

Thirdly, Let us, in the next place, conſider the effects and influence this deſertion had upon the ſpirit of Chriſt.

And though it did not drive him to deſpair, as the Papiſts falſly charge Mr Calvin to have affirmed; yet it even amazed him, and almoſt ſwallowed up his ſoul in the deeps of trouble and conſternation. This cry is a cry from the deeps, from a ſoul oppreſſed even to death. Never was the Lord Jeſus ſo put to it before; it is a moſt aſtoniſhing outcry.

Let but five particulars be weighed, and you will ſay, never was there any darkneſs like this; no ſorrow like Chriſt's ſorrow in his deſerted ſtate: For,

Firſt, Apprehend, reader, this was a new thing to Chriſt, and that which he never was acquainted with before. From all eternity until now there had been conſtant and wonderful outlets of love, delight, and joy, from the boſom of the Father, into his boſom. He never miſſed his Father before: never ſaw a frown, or a veil, upon that bleſſed face before. This made it an heavy burden indeed, the words are words of admiration and aſtoniſhment; "My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?" thou that never didſt ſo before, haſt forſaken me now.

Secondly, As it was a new thing to Chriſt, and therefore the more amazing, ſo it was a great thing to Chriſt; ſo great, that he ſcarce knew how to ſupport it. Had it not been a great trial indeed, ſo great a ſpirit as Chriſt's was would never have ſo drooped under it, and made ſo ſad a complaint of it. It was ſo ſharp, ſo heavy an affliction to his ſoul, that it cauſed him, who was meek under all other ſufferings as a lamb, to roar under this like a lion; for ſo much thoſe words of Chriſt ſignify, Pſal. xxii. 1. "My God, "my God, why haſt thou forſaken me? Why art thou ſo far "from the voice of my roaring?" It comes from a root, that ſignifies "to howl, or roar as a lion; and rather ſignifies the "noiſe made by a wild beaſt, than the voice of a man*."

And it is as much as if Chriſt had ſaid, O my God, no words can expreſs my anguiſh: I will not ſpeak, but roar, howl out my complaint; pour it out in vollies of groans: I roar as a lion. It is no ſmall matter will make that majeſtic creature to roar: and ſure,

* *Id quod rugitum vocat, non humanam, ſed leoninam vocem ſignificat.* Bucer in loc.

Digitized by Google

ſo great a ſpirit as Chriſt's would not have roared under a ſlight burden.

Thirdly, As it was a great burden to Chriſt, ſo it was a burden laid on in the time of his greateſt diſtreſs. When his body was in tortures, and all about him was black, diſmal, and full of horror and darkneſs. He fell into this deſertion at a time when he never had the like need of divine ſupports and comforts, and that aggravated it.

Fourthly, It was a burden that lay upon him long, even from the time his ſoul began to be ſorrowful and ſore amazed in the garden, till his very death. If you were but to hold your finger in the fire for two minutes, you would not be able to bear it. But what is the finger of a man to the ſoul of Chriſt? Or what is a material fire to the wrath of the great God!

Fifthly, So heavy was this preſſure upon Chriſt's ſoul, that in all probability it haſtened his death; for it was not uſual for crucified perſons to expire ſo ſoon; and thoſe that were crucified with him were both alive after Chriſt was gone. Some have hanged more than a day and a night, ſome two full days and nights, in thoſe torments, alive; but never did any feel inwardly what Chriſt felt. He bare it till the ninth hour, and then makes a fearful outcry, and dies. The uſes follow.

Inference 1. Did God forſake Chriſt upon the croſs as a puniſhment to him for our ſins? Then it follows, *That as often as we have ſinned, ſo oft have we deſerved to be forſaken of God.* This is the juſt recompence and demerit of ſin. And, indeed, here lies the principle evil of ſin, that it ſeparates betwixt God and the ſoul. This ſeparation is both the moral evil that is in it, and the penal evil inflicted by the righteous God for it. By ſin we depart from God, and, as a due puniſhment of it, God departs from us. This will be the diſmal ſentence in the laſt day, Mat. xxv. "Depart "from me, ye curſed." Thenceforth there will be a gulph fixed betwixt God and them, Luke xix. 20. No more friendly intercourſes with the bleſſed God for ever. The eternal ſhriek of the damned is, *Wo and alas, God hath forſaken us for evermore.* Ten thouſand worlds can nowiſe recompenſe the loſs of one God. Beware, ſinners, how you ſay to God now, *Depart from us, we deſire not the knowledge of thy ways*, leſt he ſay, Depart from me, you ſhall never ſee my face.

Inf. 2. Did Chriſt never make ſuch a ſad complaint and outcry, till God hid his face from him? Then *the hiding of God's face is certainly the greateſt miſery that can poſſibly befal a gracious ſoul in this world.* When they ſcourged, buffeted, and ſmote Chriſt, yea, when they nailed him to the tree, he opened not his mouth; but when his father hid his face from him, then he cried out; yea,

Digitized by Google

his voice was the voice of roaring: this was more to him than a thousand crucifyings. And, surely, as it was to Christ, so is it to all gracious souls, the saddest stroke, the heaviest burden that ever they felt. When David forbad Absalom to come to Jerusalem, to see his father, he complains in 2 Sam. xiv. 32. "Wherefore, "(saith he,) am I come from Geshur, if I may not see the king's "face?" So doth the gracious soul bemoan itself; Wherefore am I redeemed, called, and reconciled, if I may not see the face of my God?

It is said of Tully, when he was banished from Italy, and of Demosthenes, when he was banished from Athens, that they wept every time they looked towards their own country: and, is it strange that a poor deserted believer should mourn every time he looks heaven-ward? Say, Christian, did the tears never trickle down thy cheeks when thou lookedst towards heaven, and couldst not see the face of thy God, as at other times? If two dear friends cannot part, though it be but for a season, but that parting must be in a shower; blame not the saints if they sigh and mourn bitterly when the Lord, who is the life of their life, depart, though but for a season, from them; for if God depart, their sweetest enjoyment on earth, the very crown of all their comforts is gone, and what will a king take in exchange for his crown? What can recompense a saint for the loss of his God! Indeed, if they had never seen the Lord, or tasted the incomparable sweetness of his presence, it were another matter; but the darkness which follows the sweetest light of his countenance, is double darkness.

And that which doth not a little increase the horror of this darkness is, that when their souls were thus benighted, and the sun of their comfort is set; then doth Satan, like the wild beasts of the desert, creep out of his den, and roar upon them with hideous temptations. Surely this is a sad state, and deserves tender pity! Pity is a debt due to the distressed, and the world shews not a greater distress than this. If ever you have been in troubles of this kind yourselves, you will never slight others in the same case: nay, one end of God's exercising you with troubles of this nature, is to teach you compassion towards others in the same case. Do they not cry to you, as Job xix. 21. "Have pity, have pity "upon me, O ye my friends, for the hand of God hath touched "me." Draw forth bowels of mercy and tender compassion to them; for, either you have been, or are, or may be in the same case yourselves: however, if men do not, to be sure, Christ, that hath felt it before them, and for them, will pity them.

Inf. 3. Did God really forsake Jesus Christ upon the cross? *Then from the desertion of Christ, singular consolation springs up to the people of God; yea, manifold consolation.* Principally it is a support in their

Digitized by Google

two reſpects, as it is preventive of your final deſertion and a comfortable pattern to you in your preſent ſad deſertions.

Firſt, Chriſt's deſertion is preventive of your final deſertion: becauſe he was forſaken for a time, you ſhall not be forſaken for ever: for he was forſaken for you: and God's forſaking him, though but for a few hours, is equivalent to his forſaking you for ever. It is every way as much for the dear Son of God, the darling delight of his ſoul, to be forſaken of God for a time; as if ſuch a poor inconſiderable thing as thou art, ſhould be caſt off to eternity. Now this being equivalent, and borne in thy room, muſt needs give thee the higheſt ſecurity in the world, that God will never finally withdraw from thee: had he intended to have done ſo, Chriſt had never made ſuch a ſad outcry as you hear this day, "My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?"

Secondly, Moreover, this ſad deſertion of Chriſt becomes a comfortable *pattern* to poor deſerted ſouls in divers reſpects: and the proper buſineſs of ſuch ſouls, at ſuch times, is to eye it believingly, in theſe ſix reſpects.

Firſt, Though God deſerted Chriſt, yet at the ſame time he powerfully ſupported him: his omnipotent arms were under him, though his pleaſed face was hid from him: he had not indeed his ſmiles, but he had his ſupports. So, Chriſtian, juſt ſo ſhall it be with thee: thy God may turn away his face, but he will not pluck away his arm. When one aſked holy Mr Baines, how the caſe ſtood with his ſoul, he anſwered, *ſupports* I have, tho' *ſuavities I want*. Our father, in this, deals with us, as we ourſelves ſometimes do with a child that is ſtubborn and rebellious. We turn him out of doors, and bid him begone out of our ſight: and there he ſighs and weeps; but however, for the humbling of him, we will not preſently take him into houſe and favour: yet we order, or at leaſt, permit the ſervants to carry him meat and drink. Here is fatherly care and ſupport; though no former ſmiles, or manifeſted delights.

Secondly, Though God deſerted Chriſt, yet he deſerted not God: his Father forſook him, but he could not forſake his Father, but followed him with this cry, "My God, my God, why haſt "thou forſaken me?"

And is it not even ſo with you? God goes off from your ſouls, but you cannot go off from him. No, your hearts are mourning after the Lord, ſeeking him carefully with tears; complaining of his abſence, as the greateſt evil in this world. This is Chriſt-like: ſo it was with the ſpouſe, Cant. iii. 1, 2. Her beloved had withdrawn himſelf, and was gone; but was ſhe content to part with him ſo? No ſuch thing. "By night, on my bed, I ſought him

Digitized by Google

" whom my ſoul loveth; I ſought him, but I found him not; I " will ariſe now, and go about the city," &c.

Thirdly, Though God forſook Chriſt, yet he returned to him again. It was but for a time, not for ever. In this alſo doth his deſertion parallel yours. God may, for ſeveral wiſe and holy reaſons, hide his face from you, but not ſo as it is hid from the damned, who ſhall never ſee it again. This cloud will paſs away; this night ſhall have a bright morning: " For (ſaith thy " God) I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always " wroth; for the ſpirit ſhall fail before me, and the ſouls which " I have made." As if he ſhould ſay, I may contend with him for a time, to humble him, but not for ever, leſt, inſtead of a ſad child, I ſhould have a dead child. Oh the tenderneſs even of a diſpleaſed father!

Fourthly, Though God forſook Chriſt, yet at that time he could juſtify God. So you read, Pſal. xxii. 2, 3. " O my God (ſaith he) " I cry in the day-time, but thou heareſt not; and in the night-" ſeaſon, and am not ſilent: but thou art holy." Is not thy ſpirit, according to the meaſure, framed like Chriſt's in this; canſt thou not ſay, even when he writes bitter things againſt thee, he is a holy, faithful, and good God for all this? I am deſerted but not wronged. There is not one drop of injuſtice in all the ſea of my ſorrows. Though he condemn me, I muſt, and will juſtify him; this alſo is Chriſt-like.

Fifthly, Though God took from Chriſt all viſible and ſenſible comforts, inward as well as outward; yet Chriſt ſubſiſted, by faith, in the abſence of them all: his deſertion put him upon the acting of his faith. *My God, my God*, are words of faith; the words of one that wholly depends upon his God: and is it not ſo with you too? Senſe of love is gone, ſweet ſights of God ſhut up in a dark cloud; well, what then? muſt thy hands preſently hang down, and thy ſoul give up all its hopes? what! is there no faith to relieve in this caſe? Yes, yes, and bleſſed be God for faith. " Who is among you that feareth the Lord, and obeyeth the voice " of his ſervants, that walketh in darkneſs, and hath no light; " let him truſt in the name of the Lord, and ſtay himſelf upon " his God," Iſa. l. 10. To conclude,

Sixthly, Chriſt was deſerted, a little before the glorious morning of light and joy dawned upon him. It was a little, a very little while, after this ſad cry, before he triumphed glorioufly; and ſo it may be with you: heavineſs may endure for a night, but joy and gladneſs will come in the morning. You know how Mr Glover was tranſported with joy, and cried out, as a man in a rapture, O Auſtin! he is come, he is come, he is come, meaning the Comforter, who for ſome time had been abſent from his ſoul.

Digitized by Google

But, I fear I am abſolutely and finally forſaken.

Why ſo? Do you find the characters of ſuch a deſertion upon your ſoul? Be righteous judges, and tell me, whether you find an heart willing to forſake God? Is it indifferent to you whether God ever return again or no? Are there no mournings, meltings, or thirſtings after the Lord? Indeed, if you forſake him, he will caſt you off for ever; but can you do ſo? Oh, no, let him do what he will, I am reſolved to wait for him, cleave to him, mourn after him, though I have no preſent comfort from him, no aſſurance of my intereſt in him; yet will I not exchange my poor weak hopes for all the good in this world.

Again, you ſay God hath forſaken you, but hath he *let looſe the bridle before you?* To allude to Job xxx. 11. Hath he taken away from your ſouls all conſcientious tenderneſs of ſin, ſo that now you can ſin freely, and without any regret? If ſo, it is a ſad token indeed: tell me, ſoul, if thou, indeed, judgeſt God will never return in loving-kindneſs to thee any more; why doſt thou not then give thyſelf over to the pleaſures of ſin, and fetch thy comforts that way, from the creature, ſince thou canſt have no comfort from thy God? Oh, no, I cannot do ſo; if I die in darkneſs and ſorrow, I will never do ſo: my ſoul is as full of fear and hatred of ſin as ever, though empty of joy and comfort. Surely, theſe are no tokens of a ſoul finally abandoned by its God.

Inf. 4. Did God forſake his own Son upon the croſs? *Then the deareſt of God's people may, for a time, be forſaken of their God.* Think it not ſtrange, when you, that are the children of light, meet with darkneſs, yea, and walk in it; neither charge God fooliſhly; nor ſay he deals hardly with you. You ſee what befel Jeſus Chriſt, whom his ſoul delighted in: It is doubtleſs your concernment to expect and prepare for days of darkneſs. You have heard the doleful cry of Chriſt, "My God, my God, why haſt "thou forſaken me?" You know how it was with Job, David, Heman, Aſaph, and many others, the dear ſervants of God, what heart-melting lamentations they had made upon this account; and are you better than they? Oh, prepare for ſpiritual troubles; I am ſure you do enough every day to involve you in darkneſs. Now, if at any time this trial befal you, mind theſe two ſeaſonable *admonitions*, and lay them up for ſuch a time.

Admonition 1. Firſt, *Exerciſe the faith of adherence, when you have loſt the faith of evidence.* When God takes away that, he leaves this: that is neceſſary to the comfort, this to the life of his people. It is ſweet to live in views of your intereſt, but if they be gone, believe and rely on God, for an intereſt. Stay yourſelves on your God when you have no light, Iſa. l. 10. Drop this an-

Digitized by Google

chor in the dark, and do not reckon all gone when evidence is gone: never reckon yourselves undone whilst you can adhere to your God. Direct acts are noble acts of faith, as well as reflexive ones; yea, and in some respects to be preferred to them. For,

First, As your comfort depends on the evidencing acts of faith, so your salvation upon the adhering act of faith. Evidence comforts, affiance saves you; and, sure, salvation is more than comfort.

Secondly, Your faith of evidence hath more sensible sweetness, but your faith of adherence is of more constancy and continuance: the former is as a flower in its month, the latter sticks by you all the year.

Thirdly, Faith of evidence brings more joy to you, but faith of adherence brings more glory to God: for thereby you trust him when you cannot see him; yea, you believe not only without, but against sense and feeling; and, doubtless, that which brings glory to God, is better than that which brings comfort to you. O then exercise this, when you have lost that.

Admonition 2. Secondly, *Take the right method to recover the sweet light which you have sinned away from your souls.* Do not go about from one to another complaining; nor yet sit down desponding under your burden. But,

First, Search diligently after the cause of God's withdrawment: urge him hard, by prayer, to tell thee wherefore he contends with thee, Job x. 2. Say, Lord, what have I done that so offends thy Spirit? What evil is it which thou so rebukest? I beseech thee shew me the cause of thine anger: have I grieved thy Spirit in this thing, or in that? Was it my neglect of duty, or my formality in duties? Was I not thankful for the sense of thy love, when it was shed abroad in my heart? O Lord, why is it thus with me?

Secondly, Humble your souls before the Lord for every evil you shall be convinced of: tell him, it pierces your hearts that you have so displeased him, and that it shall be a caution to you, whilst you live, never to return again to folly: invite him again to your souls, and mourn after the Lord till you have found him: If you seek him, he will be found of you, 2 Cor. xv. 2. It may be you shall have a thousand comforters come about your sad souls, in such a time to comfort them: this will be to you instead of God, and that will repair your loss of Christ: despise them all, and say, I am resolved to sit as a widow till Christ return; he, or none, shall have my love.

Thirdly, Wait on in the use of means till Christ return. O be not discouraged; though he tarry, wait you for him; for, *blessed are all they that wait for him.*

Digitized by Google.

SERMON XXXIV.

The fifth excellent Saying of CHRIST upon the Croſs, illuſtrated.

JOHN xix. 28.

After this, Jeſus knowing all things were now accompliſhed, that the ſcripture might be fulfilled, ſaith, I thirſt.

IT is as truly, as commonly ſaid, *death is dry:* Chriſt found it ſo, when he died. When his ſpirit laboured in the agonies of death, then he ſaid, *I thirſt.*

This is the fifth word of Chriſt upon the croſs, ſpoken a little before he bowed the head and yielded up the ghoſt. It is only recorded by this evangeliſt; and, there are four things remarkable in this complaint of Chriſt, viz. The perſon complaining: the complaint he made: the time when, and the reaſon why he ſo complained.

Firſt, The perſon complaining. *Jeſus ſaid, I thirſt.* This is a clear evidence, that it was no common ſuffering: great and reſolute ſpirits will not complain for ſmall matters. The ſpirit of a common man will endure much, before it utters any complaint. Let us therefore ſee,

Secondly, The affliction, or ſuffering, he complains of; and that is *thirſt.* There are two ſorts of thirſt, one natural and proper, another ſpiritual and figurative: Chriſt felt both at this time. His ſoul thirſted, in vehement deſires and longings, to accompliſh and finiſh that great and difficult work he was now about; and his body thirſted, by reaſon of thoſe unparalleled agonies it laboured under, for the accompliſhing thereof: but it was the proper natural thirſt he here intends, when he ſaid, *I thirſt.* Now, "this natural thirſt," of which he complains, "is the raging of "the appetite for moiſt nouriſhment, ariſing from ſcorching up "of the parts of the body for want of moiſture*." And, amongſt all the pains and afflictions of the body, there can ſcarcely be named a greater, and more intolerable one, than extreme thirſt. The moſt mighty and valiant have ſtooped under it. Mighty Samſon, after all his conqueſts and victories, complains thus, Judges xv. 18. "And he was ſore athirſt, and called on the "Lord, and ſaid, Thou haſt given this great deliverance into the "hand of thy ſervant, and now ſhall I die for thirſt, and fall in-

* *Sitis eſt cupiditas nutrimenti, potiſſimum humidi, orta ex averſatione partium corporis animalis, quæ irrigatione egent.* Keckerm. Phyſ. p. 404.

Digitized by Google

" to the hands of the uncircumciſed?" Great Darius drank filthy water, defiled with the bodies of the ſlain, to relieve his thirſt, " and proteſted, never any drink was more pleaſant to him*." Hence, Iſa. xli. 17. thirſt is put to expreſs the moſt afflicted ſtate. " When the poor and needy ſeek water, and there is none, " and their tongue faileth for thirſt, I the Lord will hear them;" i. e. when my people are in extreme neceſſities, under any extraordinary preſſures and diſtreſſes, I will be with them, to ſupply and relieve them. Thirſt cauſes a moſt painful compreſſion of the heart, when the body, like a ſpunge, ſucks and draws for moiſture, and there is none. And this may be occaſioned, either by long abſtinence from drink, or by the labouring and expence of the ſpirits under grievous agonies and extreme tortures; which, like a fire within, ſoon ſcorch up the very radical moiſture.

Now, though we find not that Chriſt taſted a drop ſince he ſat with his diſciples at the table; after that, no more refreſhments for him in this world: yet that was not the cauſe of this raging thirſt; but it is to be aſcribed to the extreme ſufferings which he ſo long had conflicted with, both in his ſoul and body. Theſe preyed upon him, and drank up his very ſpirits. Hence came this ſad complaint, *I thirſt.*

Thirdly, Let us conſider the time when he thus complained. " When all things were now accompliſhed," ſaith the text; i. e. when all things were even ready to be accompliſhed in his death, A little, a very little while before his expiration, when the pangs of death began to be ſtrong upon him: and ſo it was both a ſign of death at hand, and of his love to us, which was ſtronger than death, that would not complain ſooner, becauſe he would admit of no relief, nor take the leaſt refreſhment, until he had done his work.

Fourthly, and laſtly, Take notice of the deſign and end of his complaint: " that the ſcripture might be fulfilled, he ſaith, I thirſt;" i. e. that it might appear, for the ſatisfaction of our faith, that whatſoever had been predicted by the prophets, was exactly accompliſhed, even to a circumſtance in him. Now it was foretold of him, Pſal. lxix. 21. " They gave me gall for my meat, and, in " my thirſt, they give me vinegar to drink;" and herein it was verified. Hence the note is,

Doct. *That ſuch were the agonies and extreme ſufferings of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt upon the croſs, as drank up his very ſpirits, and made him cry, I thirſt.*

" If I, (ſaid † one) ſhould live a thouſand years, and every day

* *Cujuſmodi voluptatis hactenus inexpertus fui?* Plut.

† *Si poſſem vivere mille annos, et qualibet die millies mori pro eo, eadem morte qua ille*

Digitized by Google

" die a thouſand times the ſame death for Chriſt that he once died " for me, yet all this would be nothing to the ſorrows Chriſt en- " dured in his death." At this time the bridegroom Chriſt might have borrowed the words of his ſpouſe, the church, Lam. i. 12. " Is it nothing to you, all ye that paſs by? See and behold, if " there be any ſorrow like unto my ſorrow which is done unto " me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his " fierce anger."

Here we are to enquire into, and conſider the extremities and agonies Chriſt laboured under upon the croſs, which occaſioned this ſad complaint of thirſt; and then make application, in the ſeveral inferences of truth deducible from it.

Now the ſufferings of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt upon the croſs were two-fold, viz. His corporeal, and ſpiritual ſufferings: We ſhall open them diſtinctly, and then ſhew how both theſe meeting together upon him in their fulneſs and extremity, muſt needs conſume his very radical moiſture, and make him cry, *I thirſt.* To begin with the firſt.

Firſt, His corporeal and more external ſufferings were exceeding great, acute, and extreme ſufferings; for they were ſharp, univerſal, continual, and unrelieved by any inward comfort.

Firſt, They were *ſharp ſufferings;* for his body was racked or digged in thoſe parts where ſenſe more eminently dwells: in the hands and feet the veins and ſinews meet, and their pain and anguiſh meet with them; Pſal. xxii. 16. " They digged my hands " and my feet*." Now Chriſt, by reaſon of his exact and excellent temper of body, had doubtleſs more quick, tender and delicate ſenſes than other men: his body was ſo formed, that it might be a capacious veſſel, to take in more ſufferings than any other body could. Senſe is, in ſome, more delicate and tender, and in others dull and blunt, according to the temperament and vivacity of the body and ſpirits; but in none as it was in Chriſt, whoſe body was miraculouſly formed on purpoſe to ſuffer unparalleled miſeries and ſorrows in: " A body haſt thou fitted me," Heb. x. 5. Neither ſin nor ſickneſs had any way enfeebled or dulled it.

Secondly, As his pains were ſharp, ſo they were *univerſal*, not affecting one, but every part; they ſeized every member; from head to foot, no member was free from torture: for, as his head was wounded with thorns, his back with bloody laſhes, his hands and feet with nails, ſo every other part was ſtretched and diſtended beyond its natural length, by hanging

pro me mortuus eſt ſemel; nihil eſſet ad dolorem quem habuit in ſe. Edmund de ſpeculo. Eccleſ. c. 23.

* His body was of a moſt excellent contexture when it was miraculouſly formed. *Aquin. pars tertia. Art.* 6.

Digitized by Google

upon that cruel engine of torment, the croſs. And as every member, ſo every particular ſenſe, was afflicted; his ſight with vile wretches, cruel murderers that ſtood about him; his hearing with horrid blaſphemies, belched out againſt him; his taſte with vinegar and gall, which they gave to aggravate his miſery; his ſmell with that filthy Golgotha where he was crucified, and his feeling with exquiſite pains in every part; ſo that he was not only ſharply, but univerſally tormented.

Thirdly, Theſe univerſal pains were *continual*, not by fits, but without any intermiſſion. He had not a moment's eaſe by the ceſſation of pains; wave came upon wave, one grief driving on another, till all God's waves and billows had gone over him. To be in extremity of pain, and that without a moment's intermiſſion, will quickly pull down the ſtouteſt nature in the world.

Fourthly, and laſtly, As his pains were ſharp, univerſal and continual, ſo they were altogether unrelieved by his underſtanding part. If a man have ſweet comforts flowing into his ſoul from God, they will ſweetly demulce and allay the pains of the body: this made the martyrs ſhout amidſt the flames. Yes, even inferior comforts and delights of the mind, will greatly relieve the oppreſſed body.

It is ſaid of * Poſſidonius, that, in a great fit of the ſtone, he ſolaced himſelf with diſcourſes of moral virtue, and when the pain twinged him, he would ſay, "O pain thou doeſt nothing, though "thou art a little troubleſome, I will never confeſs thee to be evil." And Epicurus, in the fits of the cholic, refreſhed himſelf, *ob memoriam inventorum*, i. e. by his inventions in philoſophy.

But now Chriſt had no relief this way in the leaſt; not a drop of comfort came from heaven into his ſoul to relieve it, and the body by it: but, on the contrary, his ſoul was filled up with grief, and had an heavier burden of its own to bear than that of the body; ſo that inſtead of relieving, it increaſed unſpeakably the burden of its outward man. For,

Secondly, Let us conſider theſe inward ſufferings of his ſoul, how great they were, and how quickly they ſpent his natural ſtrength, and turned his moiſture into the drought of ſummer. And,

Firſt, His ſoul felt *the wrath of an angry God*, which was terribly impreſſed upon it. The wrath of a king is as the roaring of a lion; but what is that to the wrath of a Deity? See what a deſcription is given of it in Nahum i. 6. "Who can ſtand before his in-"dignation: and who can abide in the fierceneſs of his anger? "His fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down "by him." Had not the ſtrength that ſupported Chriſt been

* *Nihil agis dolor, quamvis ſis moleſtus, nunquam confitebor te eſſe malum.*

Digitized by Google

greater than that of rocks, this wrath had certainly overwhelmed and ground him to powder.

Secondly, As it was the wrath of God that lay upon his ſoul, ſo it was the *pure wrath* of God, without any allay or mixture: not one drop of comfort came from heaven or earth; all the ingredients in his cup were bitter ones: There was wrath without mercy; yea, wrath without the leaſt degree of ſparing mercy; "for God "ſpared not his own Son," Rom. viii. 32. Had Chriſt been abated or ſpared, we had not. If our mercies muſt be pure mercies, and our glory in heaven pure and unmixed glory, then the wrath which he ſuffered muſt be pure and unmixed wrath. Yea,

Thirdly, As the wrath, the pure unmixed wrath of God, lay upon his ſoul, ſo *all the wrath of God* was poured out upon him, even to the laſt drop; ſo that there is not one drop reſerved for the elect to feel. Chriſt's cup was deep and large, it contained all the fury and wrath of an infinite God in it! and yet he drank it up: he bare it all, ſo that to believing ſouls, who come to make peace with God through Chriſt, he ſaith, Iſa. xxvii. 4. "Fury is not in me." In all the chaſtiſements God inflicts upon his people, there is no vindictive wrath; Chriſt bore it all in his own ſoul and body on the tree.

Fourthly, As it was all the wrath of God that lay upon Chriſt, ſo *it was wrath aggravated, in divers reſpects, beyond that which the damned themſelves do ſuffer*. That is ſtrange, you will ſay; can there be any ſufferings worſe than thoſe the damned ſuffer, upon whom the wrath of an infinite God is immediately tranſacted, who holds them up with the arm of his power, while the arm of his juſtice lies on eternally? Can any ſorrows be greater than theſe? Yes; Chriſt's ſufferings were beyond theirs in divers particulars.

Firſt, None of the damned were ever ſo near and dear to God as Chriſt was: they were eſtranged from the womb, but Chriſt lay in his boſom. When he ſmote Chriſt, he ſmote "the man that "was his fellow," Zech. xiii. 7. But in ſmiting them, he ſmites his enemies. When he had to do, in a way of ſatisfaction, with Chriſt, he is ſaid not to ſpare his own ſon, Rom. viii. 32. Never was the fury of God poured out upon ſuch a perſon before.

Secondly, None of the damned had ever ſo large a capacity to take in a full ſenſe of the wrath of God as Chriſt had. The larger any one's capacity is to underſtand and weigh his troubles fully, the more grievous and heavy is his burden. If a man caſt veſſels of greater and leſſer quantity into the ſea, though all will be full, yet the greater the veſſel is, the more water it contains. Now Chriſt had a capacity beyond all mere creatures to take in the wrath of his Father; and what deep and large apprehenſions he had of it may be judged by his bloody ſweat in the garden, which

Digitized by Google

was the effect of his mere apprehenſions of the wrath of God. Chriſt was a large veſſel indeed: as he is capable of more glory, ſo of more ſenſe and miſery than any other perſon in the world.

Thirdly, The damned ſuffer not ſo innocently as Chriſt ſuffered; they ſuffer the juſt demerit and recompence of their ſin: They have deſerved all that wrath of God which they feel, and muſt feel for ever: It is but that recompence which was meet; but Chriſt was altogether innocent: He had done no iniquity, neither was guile found in his mouth; yet it pleaſed the Lord to bruiſe him. When Chriſt ſuffered, he ſuffered not for what he had done; but his ſufferings were the ſufferings of a ſurety, paying the debts of others. "The Meſſiah was cut off, but not for himſelf," Dan. ix. 26. Thus you ſee what his external ſufferings in his body, and his internal ſufferings in his ſoul were.

Thirdly, In the laſt place, it is evident that ſuch extreme ſufferings as theſe, meeting together upon him, muſt needs exhauſt his very ſpirits, and make him cry, *I thirſt*. For let us conſider,

Firſt, What mere external pains, and outward afflictions can do. Theſe prey upon, and conſume our ſpirits. * So David complains, Pſal. xxxix. 11. "When thou with rebukes, correcteſt "man for iniquity; thou makeſt his beauty to conſume away as "a moth," i. e. look, as a moth frets and conſumes the moſt ſtrong and well wrought garment, and makes it ſeary and rotten without any noiſe; ſo afflictions waſte and wear out the ſtrongeſt bodies. They make bodies of the firmeſt conſtitution like an old rotten garment: They ſhrivel and dry up the moſt vigorous and flouriſhing body, and make it like a bottle in the ſmoke, Pſal. cxix. 83.

Secondly, Conſider what mere internal troubles of the ſoul can do upon the ſtrongeſt body: Theſe ſpend its ſtrength, and devour the ſpirits. So Solomon ſpeaks, Prov. xvii. 22. "A broken ſpirit "drieth the bones," i. e. it conſumes the very marrow with which they are moiſtened. So Pſal. xxxii. 3, 4. "My bones "waxed old, and through my roaring all the day long: for day "and night thy hand was heavy on me: my moiſture (or chief ſap) "is turned into the drought of ſummer." What a ſpectacle of pity was Francis Spira become, merely through the anguiſh of his ſpirit? a ſpirit ſharpened with ſuch troubles, like a keen knife, cuts through the ſheath. Certainly, whoever hath had any acquaintance with troubles of ſoul, knows, by ſad experience, how, like an internal flame, it feeds and preys upon the very ſpirits, ſo that the ſtrongeſt ſtoop and ſink under it. But,

* For as a bottle is ſcorched and waſted in ſmoke, ſo the ſpirit by continual pains and the conſtant violent heat of grief is ſpent and conſumed. *Mol. on this place.*

Digitized by Google

Thirdly, When outward bodily pains ſhall meet with inward ſpiritual troubles, and both in extremity ſhall come in one day; how ſoon muſt the firmeſt body fail and waſte away like a candle lighted at both ends? Now ſtrength fails a-pace, and nature muſt fall flat under this load. When the ſhip in which Paul ſailed, fell into a place where two ſeas met, it was quickly wrecked; and ſo will the beſt conſtituted body in the world, if it fall under both theſe troubles together; the ſoul and body ſympathize with each other under trouble, and mutually relieve each other.

If the body be ſick and full of pain, the ſpirit ſupports, cheers, and relieves it by reaſon and reſolution all that it can; and if the ſpirit be afflicted, the body ſympathizes and helps to bear up the ſpirit; but now, if the one be over-laden with ſtrong pains, more than it can bear, and calls for aid from the other, and the other be oppreſſed with intolerable anguiſh, and cries out under a burden greater than it can bear, ſo that it can contribute no help, but inſtead thereof adds to its burden, which before was above its ſtrength to bear, then nature muſt needs fail, and the friendly union betwixt ſoul and body ſuffer a diſſolution by ſuch an extraordinary preſſure as this. So it was with Chriſt, when outward and inward ſorrows met in one day in their extremity upon him. Hence the bitter cry, *I thirſt.*

Inference 1. *How horrid a thing is ſin! How great is that evil of evils, which deſerves that all this ſhould be inflicted and ſuffered for the expiation of it!*

The ſufferings of Chriſt for ſin give us the true account, and fulleſt repreſentation of its evil. "The law (ſaith * one) is a "bright glaſs, wherein we may ſee the evil of ſin; but there is "the red glaſs of the ſufferings of Chriſt, and in that we may ſee "more of the evil of ſin, than if God ſhould let us down to hell, "and there we ſhould ſee all the tortures and torments of the "damned. If we ſhould ſee them how they lie ſweltering under "God's wrath there, it were not ſo much as the beholding of "ſin through the red glaſs of the ſufferings of Chriſt."

Suppoſe the bars of the bottomleſs pit were broken up, and damned ſpirits ſhould aſcend from thence, and come up among us, with the chains of darkneſs rattling at their heels, and we ſhould hear the groans, and ſee the ghaſtly paleneſs and trembling of thoſe poor creatures upon whom the righteous God hath impreſſed his fury and indignation; if we could hear how their conſciences are laſhed by the fearful ſcourge of guilt, and how they ſhriek at every laſh the arm of juſtice gives them.

* Mr J. B. in his Evil of Evils, p. 124.

Digitized by Google

If we ſhould ſee and hear all this, it is not ſo much as what we may ſee in this text, where the Son of God, under his ſufferings for it, cries out, *I thirſt.* For, as I ſhewed you before, Chriſt's ſufferings, in divers reſpects, were beyond theirs. O then, let not thy vain heart ſlight ſin, as if it were but a ſmall thing! If ever God ſhew thee the face of ſin in this glaſs, thou wilt ſay, there is not ſuch another horrid repreſentation to be made to a man in all the world. Fools make a mock at ſin, but wiſe men tremble at it.

Inf. 2. *How afflictive and intolerable are inward troubles.* Did Chriſt complain ſo ſadly under them, and cry, *I thirſt?* Surely then they are not ſuch light matters as many are apt to make of them. If they ſo ſcorched the very heart of Chriſt, dried up the green tree, preyed upon his very ſpirits, and turned his moiſture into the drought of ſummer, they deſerve not to be ſlighted, as they are by ſome. The Lord Jeſus was fitted to bear and ſuffer as ſtrong troubles as ever befel the nature of man, and he did bear all other troubles with admirable patience; but when it came to this, when the flames of God's wrath ſcorched his ſoul, then he cries, *I thirſt.*

David's heart was, for courage, as the heart of a lion; but when God exerciſed him with inward troubles for ſin, then he roars out under the anguiſh of it, "I am feeble, and ſore broken; "I have roared, by reaſon, of the diſquietneſs of my heart. My "heart panteth, my ſtrength faileth me: As for the light of mine "eyes, it is alſo gone from me," Pſal. xxxviii. 8, 10. "A wounded ſpirit who can bear!" Many have profeſſed that all the torments in the world are but toys to it: the racking fits of the gout, the grinding tortures of the ſtone, are nothing to the wrath of God upon the conſcience. What is the worm that never dies but the efficacy of a guilty conſcience? This worm feeds upon, and gnaws the very inwards, the tender and moſt ſenſible part of man; and is the principal part of hell's horror. In bodily pains, a man may be relieved by proper medicines; here nothing but the blood of ſprinkling relieves. In outward pains, the body may be ſupported by the reſolution and courage of the mind; here the mind itſelf is wounded. O let none deſpiſe theſe troubles, they are dreadful things!

Inf. 3. *How dreadful a place is hell, where this cry is heard for ever, I thirſt!* There the wrath of the great and terrible God flames upon the damned for ever, in which they thirſt, and none relieves them. If Chriſt complained, *I thirſt*, when he had con-

* For then the devouring flame burns up thoſe whom carnal pleaſure pollutes. Then they are caſt into the infinite open gulph of hell. *Greg.*

Digitized by Google

flicted but a few hours with the wrath of God; what is their ſtate then, that are to grapple with it for ever? When millions of years are paſt and gone, ten thouſand millions more are coming on. There is an everlaſting thirſt in hell, and it admits of no relief*. There are no full cups in hell, but an eternal, unrelieved thirſt. Think on this ye that now add drunkenneſs to thirſt, who wallow in all ſenſual pleaſures, and drown nature in an exceſs of luxury. Remember what Dives ſaid in Luke xvi. 24. "And he "cried and ſaid, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and ſend "Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool "my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame." No cups of water, no bowls of wine in hell. There, that throat will be parched with thirſt, which is now drowned with exceſs. The ſongs of the drunkard turned into howlings. If thirſt in the extremity of it be now ſo inſufferable, what is that thirſt which is infinitely beyond this in meaſure, and never ſhall be relieved? Say not it is hard that God ſhould deal thus with his poor creatures. You will not think it ſo, if you conſider what he expoſed his own dear Son to, when ſin was but imputed to him. And what that man deſerves to feel, that hath not only merited hell, but, by refuſing Chriſt the remedy, the hotteſt place in hell*.

In this thirſt of Chriſt we have the liveliceſt emblem of the ſtate of the damned, that ever was preſented to men in this world. Here you ſee a perſon labouring in extremity, under the infinite wrath of the great and terrible God lying upon his ſoul and body at once, and cauſing him to utter this doleful cry, *I thirſt*. Only Chriſt endured this but a little while, the damned muſt endure it for ever: in that they differ, as alſo in the innocency and ability of the perſons ſuffering, and in the end for which they ſuffer. But, ſurely, ſuch as this will the cry of thoſe ſouls be that are caſt away for ever. O terrible thirſt!

Inf. 4. *How much do nice and wanton appetites deſerve to be reproved?* The Son of God wanted a draught of cold water to relieve him, and could not have it. God hath given us variety of refreſhing creatures to relieve us, and we deſpiſe them. We have better things than a cup of water to refreſh and delight us when we are thirſty, and yet are not pleaſed. O that this complaint of Chriſt on the croſs, *I thirſt*, were but believingly conſidered, it

* An Engliſh merchant living at Dantzic, related this ſtory to a godly miniſter, That a friend of his (a merchant alſo) went to a convent, and dined with the friars there; their entertainment was very noble. After he had dined and ſeen all, the merchant commended their pleaſant lives; yea, ſaid one of the friars to him, we live gallantly indeed, had we any body to go to hell for us when we die. *Mr Firmin's Real Chriſtian.*

Digitized by Google

would make you bleſs God for what ye now deſpiſe, and beget contentment in you for the meaneſt mercies, and moſt common favours in this world. Did the Lord of all things cry, *I thirſt*, and had nothing in his extremity to comfort him; and doſt thou, who haſt a thouſand times over forfeited all temporal as well as ſpiritual mercies, contemn and ſlight the good creatures of God! What, deſpiſe a cup of water, who deſerveſt nothing but a cup of wrath from the hand of the Lord! O lay it to heart, and hence learn contentment with any thing.

Inf. 5. *Did Jeſus Chriſt upon the croſs cry*, I thirſt? *Then believers ſhall never thirſt eternally. Their thirſt ſhall be certainly ſatisfied.*

There is a threefold thirſt, *gracious*, *natural*, and *penal*. The gracious thirſt is the vehement deſire of a ſpiritual heart after God. Of this David ſpeaks, Pſal. xlii. 1, 2. "As the hart panteth after "the water-brooks, ſo panteth my ſoul after thee, O God. My "ſoul thirſteth for God, for the living God: When ſhall I come "and appear before God?" And this is indeed a vehement thirſt; it makes the ſoul break with the longings it hath after God, Pſal. cxix. It is a thirſt proper to believers, who have taſted that the Lord is gracious.

Natural thirſt is (as before was noted) a deſire of refreſhment by humid nouriſhment, and it is common both to believers and unbelievers in this world. God's dear ſaints have been driven to ſuch extremities in this life, that their tongues have even failed for thirſt. "When the poor and needy ſeek water, and there is "none, and their tongue faileth for thirſt," Iſa. xli. 17. And of the people of God in their captivity, it is ſaid, Lamb. iv. 4. "The "tongue of the ſucking child cleaveth to the roof of his mouth "for thirſt. The young children aſk bread, and no man break-"eth it unto them. They that feed delicately are deſolate in the "ſtreets; they that were brought up in ſcarlet embrace dung-"hills." To this many that fear the Lord have been reduced.

A *penal thirſt*, is God's juſt denying of all refreſhments or relief to ſinners in their extremities, and that as a due puniſhment for their ſin. This believers ſhall never feel, becauſe when Chriſt thirſted upon the croſs, he made full ſatisfaction to God in their room. Theſe ſufferings of Chriſt, as they were ordained for them, ſo the benefits of them are truly imputed to them. And for the natural thirſt, that ſhall be ſatisfied: for in heaven we ſhall live without theſe neceſſities and dependencies upon the creature; we ſhall be equal with the angels in the way and manner of living and ſubſiſting, ισαγγελοι ϵἰσιν, Luke xx. 36. And for the gracious thirſting of their ſouls for God, it ſhall be fully ſatisfied. So it is promiſed, Mat. v. 6. "Bleſſed are they which hunger and

Digitized by Google

" thirſt after righteouſneſs, for they ſhall be filled:" They ſhall then depend no more upon the ſtream, but drink from the overflowing fountain itſelf, Pſal. xxxvi. 8. " They ſhall be abundantly " ſatisfied with the fatneſs of thy houſe, and thou ſhalt make " them drink of the river of thy pleaſures: for with thee is the " fountain of life, and in thy light ſhall we ſee light:" There they ſhall drink and praiſe, and praiſe and drink for evermore: all their thirſty deſires ſhall be filled with complete ſatisfaction. O how deſirable a ſtate is heaven upon this account! and how ſhould we be reſtleſs till we come thither; as the thirſty traveller is until he meet that cool, refreſhing ſpring he wants and ſeeks for. This preſent ſtate is a ſtate of thirſting, that to come of refreſhment and ſatisfaction. Some drops indeed come from the fountain by faith, but they quench not the believer's thirſt; rather like water ſprinkled on the fire, they make it burn the more: but there the thirſty ſoul hath enough.

O bleſs God, that Jeſus Chriſt thirſted under the heat of his wrath once, that you might not be ſcorched with it for ever. If he had not cried, *I thirſt*, you muſt have cried out of thirſt eternally, and never be ſatisfied.

Inf. 6. Laſtly; Did Chriſt in the extremity of his ſufferings cry, *I thirſt? Then how great, beyond all compare, is the love of God to ſinners, who for their ſakes expoſed the Son of his love to ſuch extreme ſufferings?*

Three conſiderations marvellouſly heighten that love of the Father.

Firſt, His putting the Lord Jeſus into ſuch a condition. There is none of us would endure to ſee a child of our own lye panting, and thirſting in the extremity of torments, for the faireſt inheritance on earth; much leſs, to have the ſoul of a child conflicting with the wrath of God, and making ſuch heart-rending complaints as Chriſt made upon the croſs, if we might have the largeſt empire in the world for it: yet, ſuch was the ſtrength of the love of God to us, that he willingly gave Jeſus Chriſt to all this miſery and torture for us. What ſhall we call this love? O the heighth, length, depth, and breadth of that love which paſſeth knowledge! The love of God to Jeſus Chriſt was infinitely beyond all the love we have for our children, as the ſea is more than a ſpoonful of water: and yet, as dearly as he loved him, he was content to expoſe him to all this, rather than we ſhould periſh eternally.

Secondly, As God the Father was content to expoſe Chriſt to this extremity, ſo in that extremity to hear his bitter cries, and dolorous complaints, and yet not relieve him with the leaſt refreſhment till he fainted and died under it. He heard the cries of his Son: that voice, *I thirſt*, pierced heaven, and reached the

Digitized by Google

Father's ear; but yet he will not refresh him in his agonies, nor abate him any thing of the debt he was now paying, and all this for the love he had to poor sinners. Had Christ been relieved in his sufferings, and spared, then God could not have pitied or spared us. The extremity of Christ's sufferings was an act of justice to him; and the greatest mercy to us that ever could be manifested. Nor indeed (though Christ so bitterly complains of his thirst) was he willing to be relieved, till he had finished his work. O love unspeakable! He doth not complain, that he might be relieved, but to manifest how great that sorrow was which his soul now felt upon our account.

Thirdly, And it should never be forgotten, that Jesus Christ was exposed to these extremities of sorrow for sinners, the greatest of sinners, who deserved not one drop of mercy from God. This commends the love of God singularly to us, in that "whilst "we were yet sinners, Christ died for us," Rom. v. 1. Thus the love of God in Jesus Christ still rises higher and higher in every discovery of it. Admire, adore, and be ravished with the thoughts of this love!

Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift.

SERMON XXXV.

The sixth excellent Saying of CHRIST upon the Cross, illustrated.

JOHN xix. 30.

When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished; and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

IT is finished. This is the sixth remarkable word of our Lord Jesus Christ upon the cross, uttered as a triumphant shout when he saw the glorious issue of all his sufferings now at hand.

It is but one word in the original; but in that one word is contained the sum of all joy; the very spirits of all divine consolation. The ancient Greeks reckoned it their excellency to speak much in a little; "to * give a sea of matter in a drop of language." What they only sought, is here found. I find some variety, (and indeed variety rather than contrariety), among expositors about the

* Πελαγος πραγματων, εν σαλαγματι ρηματων. *Cypr. Ep.* 568.

Digitized by Google

relation of these words. Some are of opinion, that the antecedent is the legal types and ceremonies; and so make this to be the meaning *; *It is finished:* that is, all the types and prefigurations that shadowed forth the redemption of souls, by the blood of Christ, are now fulfilled and accomplished. And, doubtless, as this is itself a truth, so it is such a truth as may not be excluded, as foreign to the true scope and sense of this place. And though it be objected, that many types and prefigurations remained at this time unsatisfied, even all that looked to the actual death of Christ, his continuance in the state of the dead, and his resurrection; yet it is easily removed, "by considering that they are said to be finish-"ed, because they were just finishing, or ready to be finished: "and it is as if Christ had said, I am now putting the last hand to "it†," a few moments of time more will complete and finish it; I have the sum now in my hand, which will fully satisfy and pay God the whole debt.

It is now but bow the head, and the work is done, and all the types therein fulfilled. So that this cannot exclude the fulfilling of the types in the death of Christ, from their just claim to the sense of this place. But yet, though we cannot here exclude this sense, we cannot allow it to be the whole or principal sense: for lo! a far greater truth is contained herein, even the finishing or completing of the whole design and project of our redemption, and therein of all the types that prefigured it. Both these judicious Calvin conjoins, making the completing of redemption the principal; and the fulfilling of all the types the collateral and less principal sense of it.

Yet it must be observed, when we say, Christ finished redemption-work by his death, the meaning is not that his death alone did finish it; for his abode in the grave, resurrection, and ascension, had all of them their joint influence therein; but these being shortly to follow, all are included in the scope of this place. According then to the principal scope of the place, we observe,

Doct. *That Jesus Christ hath perfected and completely finished the great work of redemption, committed to him by God the Father.*

To this great truth the apostle gives a full testimony, Heb. x. 14. "By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are "sanctified." And to the same purpose speaks Christ, John xvii. 4. "I have glorified thee on earth! I have finished the work thou

* He teaches us that the full accomplishment of our salvation, and every part thereof, was contained in his death; the cancelling all the legal ceremonies is connected with this doctrine. *Calvin.*

† *Factum dicit, quod jam in eo fuit, et pene factum esset.* Cam.

Digitized by Google

"gaveſt me to do." Concerning this work, and the finiſhing thereof by Jeſus Chriſt upon the croſs, we ſhall enquire what this work was; how Chriſt finiſhed it; and what evidence can be produced for the finiſhing of it.

Firſt, What was the work which Chriſt finiſhed by his death?

It was the fulfilling the whole law of God in our room, and for our redemption, as a ſponſor or ſurety for us. The law is a glorious thing; the holineſs of God, that fiery attribute, is engraven or ſtamped upon every part of it; Deut. xxxiii. 2. "From his right "hand went a fiery law." The jealouſy of the Lord watched over every point and tittle of it, for his dreadful and glorious name was upon it; it curſed every one that continued not in all things contained therein, Gal. iii. 10. Two things, therefore, were neceſſarily required in him that ſhould perfectly fulfil it, and both found in our Surety, and in him only, viz. a ſubjective and effective perfection.

Firſt, A ſubjective perfection. He that wanted this, could never ſay, *It is finiſhed.* Perfect working always follows a perfect Being. That he might therefore finiſh this great work of obedience, and therein the glorious deſign of our redemption; lo! in what ſhining and perfect holineſs was he produced! Luke i. 35. "That holy thing that ſhall be born of thee, ſhall be called the "Son of God." And indeed, "ſuch an High-prieſt became us, "who is holy, harmleſs, undefiled, ſeparate from ſinners," Heb. vii. 26. So that the law could have no exception againſt his perſon; nay, it was never ſo honoured ſince its firſt promulgation, as it was by having ſuch a perfect and excellent perſon as Chriſt to ſtand at its bar, and give it due reparation.

Secondly, There muſt be alſo an effective perfection, or a perfection of working and obeying, before it could be ſaid, *It is finiſhed.* This Chriſt had; for he continued in all things written in the law, to do them: *He fulfilled all righteouſneſs*, as it behoved him to do, Matt. iii. 15. He did all that was required to be done, and ſuffered all that was requiſite to be ſuffered; he did and ſuffered all that was commanded or threatened, in ſuch perfection of obedience, both active and paſſive, that the pure eye of divine juſtice could not find a flaw in it; and ſo finiſhed the work his Father gave him to do; and this work finiſhed by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt was both a neceſſary, difficult, and precious work.

Firſt, It was a neceſſary work which Chriſt finiſhed upon the croſs; neceſſary, upon a threefold account.

Opus neceſſarium ex parte Patris; It was neceſſary on the Father's account: I do not mean that God was under any neceſſity, from his nature, of redeeming us this or any other way; for our redemption is *opus liberi concilii*, an act of the free counſel of God;

Digitized by Google

but when God had once decreed and determined to redeem and ſave poor ſinners by Jeſus Chriſt, then it became neceſſary that the counſel of God ſhould be fulfilled; Acts iv. 28. "To "do whatſoever thy hand and counſel had before determined to "be done."

Secondly, Ex parte Filii, It was neceſſary with reſpect to Chriſt, upon the account of that precious compact that was betwixt the Father and him about it. Therefore it is ſaid by Chriſt himſelf, Luke xxii. 22. "Truly the Son of man goeth as it was deter-"mined," i. e. as it was fore-agreed and covenanted; under the neceſſity of fulfilling his engagement to the Father, he came into the world; and being come, he ſtill minds his engagement, John ix. 3. "I muſt work the works of him that ſent me."

Thirdly, Ex parte noſtri. Yea, and it was no leſs neceſſary upon our account that this work ſhould be finiſhed; for, had not Chriſt finiſhed this work, ſin had quickly finiſhed all our lives, comforts, and hopes. Without the finiſhing this work, not a ſon or daughter of Adam could ever have ſeen the face of God. Therefore it is ſaid, John iii. 14, 15. "As Moſes lifted up the ſerpent "in the wilderneſs, ſo [muſt] the Son of man be lifted up; that "whoſoever believeth in him ſhould not periſh, but have ever-"laſting life." On all theſe accounts the finiſhing of this work was neceſſary.

Secondly, As it was neceſſary this work ſhould be finiſhed, ſo the finiſhing of it was exceeding difficult: It coſt many a cry, many a groan, and many a tear, before Chriſt could ſay, *It is finiſhed.* All the angels in heaven were not able, by their united ſtrength, to lift that burden one inch from the ground, which Chriſt bare upon his ſhoulders, yea, and bare it away. But how heavy a burden this was, may in part appear by his agony in the garden, and the bitter outcries he made upon the croſs, which in their proper places have been opened.

Thirdly, and laſtly, It was a moſt precious work which Chriſt finiſhed by his death; that work was diſpatched and finiſhed in few hours, which will be the matter of everlaſting ſongs and triumphs to the angels and ſaints to all eternity. O it was a precious work! The mercies that now flow out of this fountain, viz. juſtification, ſanctification, adoption, &c. are not to be valued; beſides the endleſs happineſs and glory of the world to come, which cannot enter into the heart of man to conceive. If the angels ſang when the foundation-ſtone was laid, what ſhouts, what triumphs ſhould there be among the ſaints, when this voice is heard, *It is finiſhed!*

Secondly, Let us next inform ourſelves how, and in what manner

Digitized by Google

Jesus Christ finished this glorious work; and if you search the scriptures upon that account, you will find that he finished it obediently, freely, diligently, and fully.

First, This blessed work was finished by Jesus Christ most obediently, Phil. ii. 8. "He became obedient to death, even the death "of the cross." "His obedience was the obedience of a servant, "though not servile obedience*." So it was foretold of him, before he touched this work, Isa. l. 5. "The Lord God hath "opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away "back;" i. e. My Father told me the very worst of it; he told me what hard and heavy things I must undergo, if ever I finished this design of redemption; and I was not rebellious, i. e. I heartily submitted to, and accepted all those difficulties; for there is a *Meiosis* in the words; I was content to stoop to the hardest and most ignominious part of it, rather than not finish it.

Secondly, As Christ finished it obediently, so he finished it freely. Freedom and obedience in acting are not at all opposite to, or exclusive of each other. Moses' mother nursed him in obedience to the command of Pharaoh's daughter, yet most freely with respect to her own delight and contentment in that work. So it is said of Christ, and that by his own mouth, John x. 17, 18. "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my "life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, "but I lay it down of myself: I have power to lay it down, and "I have power to take it up again. This commandment have I "received of my Father." He liked the work for the end's sake. When he had a prospect of it from eternity, then were his delights with the sons of men: then he rejoiced in the habitable parts of the earth, Prov. viii. 30, 31. And when he came into the world about it, with what a full and free consent did his heart echo to the voice of his Father calling him to it; just as you shall sometimes hear an echo answering your voice two or three times over, Psal. xl. "Lo, I come: I delight to do thy will: thy law is with-"in my heart." He finished the work freely.

Thirdly, As he finished it freely, so he finished it diligently; he wrought hard from the morning of his life to the end of it; he was never idle wherever he was, but "went about doing good," Acts x. 38. Sometimes he was so intent upon his work, that "he forgat to eat bread," John iv. 30, 31. As the life of some men is but a diversion from one trifle to another, from one pleasure to another; so the whole life of Christ was spent and taken up betwixt one work and another: never was a life so filled up with

* *Obedientia servi, non servilis.*

Digitized by Google

labour: the very moments of his time were all employed for God to finish this work.

Fourthly, and lastly, *He finished it* completely *and fully*. All that was to be done by way of impetration and meritorious redemption is fully done; no hand can come after his; angels can add nothing to it*. "That is perfected to which nothing is wanting, and to "which nothing can be added." Such is the work Christ finished. Whatever the law demanded is perfectly paid; whatever a sinner needs, is perfectly obtained and purchased; nothing can be added to what Christ hath done; he put the last hand to it, when he said, *It is finished*. Thus you see what the work was, and how Christ finished it.

Thirdly, In the last place, let us consider what assurance or evidence we have that Christ hath so finished redemption-work: and if you pursue that inquiry, you will find these, among other plain evidences of it.

First, When Christ died, redemption-work must needs be finished, inasmuch as the blood, as well as the obedience of Christ, was of infinite value and efficacy, sufficiently able to accomplish all the ends for which it was shed; "and that not by divine acceptation, "but upon the account of its proper value†." This effect, viz. the finishing redemption work meritoriously by Christ, doth not exceed the power of the cause to which we assign it, viz. the death of Christ. And if there be a sole sufficient cause in act, what hinders but the effect should follow? There was certainly enough in Christ's blood to satisfy the utmost demand of justice: when that therefore is actually shed, justice is fully paid, and, consequently, the souls for whom, and in whose names it is paid, are fully redeemed from the curse by the merit thereof.

Secondly, It is apparent that Christ finished the work, by the discharge or acquittance God the Father gave him, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand. If Christ, the sinner's surety, be, as such, discharged by God the creditor, then the debt is fully paid. Now Christ was justified, and cleared at his resurrection, from all charges and demands of justice; therefore it is said, 1 Tim. iii. 16. that he was *justified in the spirit*, i. e. openly discharged by that very act of the Godhead, his raising him from the dead. For when the grave was opened, and Christ arose, it was to him as the opening of the prison-doors, and setting a surety at liberty, who was confined for another man's debt. To the same sense Christ speaks of his ascension, John xvi. 10. "The "spirit (saith he) shall convince the world of righteousness," i. e.

* *Perfectum est, cui nihil deest, et cui nihil addi potest.*
† *Non ex divina acceptatione, sed ex proprio valore.*

Digitized by Google

of a complete and perfect righteousness in me, imputable to sinners for their perfect justification. And whereby shall he convince and satisfy them that is so? Why, by this, "Because I go to the "Father and ye see me no more." There is a great deal of force and weight in those words, "because you see me no more?" for it amounts to this much; by this you shall be satisfied I have fully and completely performed all righteousness, and that, by my active and passive obedience; I have so fully satisfied God for you, as that you shall never be charged or condemned; because, when I go to heaven, I shall abide there in glory with my Father, and not be sent back again, as I should, if any thing had been omitted by me. And this the apostle gives you also in so many plain words, Heb. x. 12, 13, 14. "After he had offered one sacrifice "for sins, for ever sat down on the right-hand of God." And what doth he infer from that, but the very truth before us, verse 14. that "by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that "are sanctified?"

Thirdly, It is evident Christ hath finished the work, by the blessed effects of it upon all that believe in him; for by virtue of the completeness of Christ's work, finished by his death, their consciences are now rationally pacified, and their souls, at death, actually received into glory; neither of which could be, if Christ had not in this world finished the work. If Christ had done his work imperfectly, he could not have given rest and tranquillity to the labouring and burdened souls that come to him, as now he doth, Mat. xi. 28. Conscience would still be hesitating, trembling, and unsatisfied; and had he not finished his work, he could not have had entrance through the vail of his flesh into heaven, as all that believe in him have, Heb. x. 19, 20. If he had but *almost* done that work, we had been but *almost saved*, that is, certainly damned. And thus you see briefly the *evidences* that the *work* is finished.

Inf. 1. Hath Christ perfected and completely finished all his work for us? *how sweet a relief is this to us that believe in him, against all the defects and imperfections of all the works of God, that are wrought by us.* There's nothing finished that we do: all our duties are imperfect duties; they come off lamely, and defectively from our hands. It is Christ's charge against the church of Sardis, Rev. iii. 2. I have not found thy works πεπληρωμενα, perfect, or filled up before God. O there is much emptiness and vanity in the best of our duties: but here is the grand relief, and that which answers to all the grounds of our doubts and fears upon that account; Jesus Christ hath finished all his work, though we can finish none of ours: and so, though we be defective, poor, imperfect creatures, in ourselves, yet, notwithstanding, we are com-

Digitized by Google

plete in him, Col. ii. 9, 10. Though we cannot perfectly obey, or fulfil one command of the law, yet is "the righteousness of the "law fulfilled in us that believe," Rom. viii. 4. Christ's complete obedience being imputed to us, makes us complete, and without fault before God.

It is true, we ought to be humbled for our defects, and troubled for every failing in obedience; but we should not be discouraged, though multitudes of weaknesses be upon us, and many infirmities compass us about, in every duty we put our hand to: though we have no righteousness of our own; yet of God, Christ is made unto us righteousness: and that righteousness of his is infinitely better than our own: instead of our own, we have his. O blessed be God for Christ's perfect righteousness!

Inf. 2. Did Christ finish his work with his own hand? *How dangerous and dishonourable a thing is it, to join any thing of our own to the righteousness of Christ, in point of justification before God.* Jesus Christ will never endure this; it reflects upon his work dishonourably; he doth not (in this case) affect *social glory*: not I, and my God; I, and my Christ, did this; he will be all, or none, in your justification. If he have finished the work, what need of our additions? And if not, to what purpose are they? Can we finish that which Christ himself could not? But we would fain be sharing with him in this honour, which he will never endure. Did he finish the work by himself, and will he ever divide the glory and praise of it with us? No, no, Christ is no half Saviour. O it is an hard thing to bring these proud hearts to live upon Christ for righteousness: we would fain add our penny to make up Christ's sum. But if you would have it so, or have nothing to do with Christ, you and your penny must perish together, Isa. l. ult. God gives us the righteousness of Christ, as he gave *manna* to the Israelites in the wilderness. It is said, Deut. viii. 16. "That he fed them "with manna in the wilderness, that he might humble them." The quality of the food was not humbling, for it was angels food, but the manner of giving it was so: they must live by faith upon God for it, from day to day. This was not like other food, produced by their own labour. Certainly God takes the right way to humble proud nature, in calling sinners wholly from their own righteousness to Christ's for their justification.

Inf. 3. Did Christ finish his work for us: Then there can be no doubt, *but he will also finish his work in us.* As he began the work of our redemption, and finished it; so he that hath begun the good work in you, will also finish it upon your souls. And of this the apostle saith, "He is confident," Phil. i. 6. Jesus Christ is not only called the *author*, but also the *finisher* of our faith, Heb. xii. 2. If he begin it, no doubt but he will finish it. And indeed

Digitized by Google

the finishing of his own work of redemption without us, gives full evidence that he will finish his work of sanctification within us; and that because these two works of Christ have a respect and relation to each other; and such a relation, that the work he finished by his own death, resurrection, and ascension, would be in vain to us, if the work of sanctification in us should not in like manner be finished. Therefore, as he presented a perfect sacrifice to God, and finished redemption-work; so will he present every man perfect and complete, for whom he offered up himself; for he will not lose the end of all his sufferings at last. To what purpose would his meritorious impetration be, without complete and full application? Be not therefore discouraged at the defects and imperfections of your inherent grace: be humbled for them, but be not dejected by them: this is Christ's work, as well as that: that work is finished, and so will this.

Inf. 4. Is Christ's work of redemption a complete and finished work? *How excellent and comfortable beyond all compare, is the method and way of faith!* Surely the way of believing is the most excellent way in which a poor sinner can approach God; for it brings before him a complete, intire, perfect righteousness; and this must needs be most honourable to God, most comfortable to the soul that draws nigh to God. O what a complete, finished, perfect thing is the righteousness of Christ! the searching eye of the holy and jealous God cannot find the least flaw or defect in it. Let God or conscience look upon it; turn it every way; view it on every side; thoroughly weigh and examine it, it will appear a pure, a perfect piece, containing in it whatsoever is necessary for the reconciling of an angry God, or pacifying of a distressed and perplexed soul. How pleasing, therefore, and acceptable to God must be that faith, which presents so complete and excellent an atonement to him! Hence the acting of our faith upon Christ for righteousness, the approaches of faith to God with such an acceptable present, is called the work of God; that is, the most grateful, acceptable, and well pleasing work to God that a creature can perform; John vi. 29. "This is the work of God, that ye be-"lieve." One act of faith pleases him more, than if you should toil all your lives at a task of obedience to the law. As it is more for God's honour and thy comfort, to pay all thou owest him at one payment, in one full sum, than to be paying by very small degrees, and never be able to make full payment, or see the bond cancelled; so this perfect work only produces perfect peace.

Inf. 5. Did Christ work, and work out all that God gave him to do, till he had finished his work? *How necessary then is a laborious working life to all that call themselves Christians?* The life of Christ, you see, was a laborious life. Shall he work and we play? Shall a

Digitized by Google

zealous, active, working Christ be reproached with idle, negligent and lazy followers? O work, and *work out your own salvation with fear and trembling*, Phil. ii. 12.

Object. But if Christ wrought so hard, we may sit still. If he finished the work, nothing remains for us to do.

Solut. Nothing of that work which Christ did, remains for you to do. It is your commendation and duty to leave all that to Christ: but there is other work for you to do; yea, store of work lying upon your hands. You must work as well as Christ, though not for the same ends Christ did. He wrought hard to satisfy the law, by fulfilling all righteousness. He wrought all his life long, to work out a righteousness to justify you before God. This work falls to no hand but Christ's: but you must work, to obey the commands of Christ into whose right ye are come by redemption: you must work, to testify your thankfulness to Christ, for the work finished for you: you must work, to glorify God by your obedience: *let your light so shine before men.* For these, and divers other such ends and reasons, your life must be a working life. God preserve all his people from the gross and vile opinions of *Antinomian libertines*, who cry up grace, and decry obedience: who under specious pretences of exalting a naked Christ upon the throne, do indeed strip him naked of a great part of his glory, and vilely dethrone him. My pen shall not English what mine eyes have read*. Tell it not in Gath.

But for thee, reader, be thou a follower of Christ, imitate thy pattern; yea, let me persuade thee, as ever thou hopest to clear up thine interest in him, imitate him in such particulars as these that follow.

First, Christ began early to work for God: he took the morning of his life, even the very beginning of it, to work for God: "How is it (said he to his parents, when he was but a child of "about twelve years old) that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I "must be about my Father's business?" Reader, if the morning of thy life be not gone, O devote it to the work of God as Christ did: if it be, ply thy work the closer in the afternoon of thy life. If a man have any great and necessary business to do, it is good doing it in the morning; afterwards a hurry of business and diversion comes on.

Secondly, As Christ began betime, so he followed his work close: he was early up, and he wrought hard, so hard, that "he forgat "to eat bread," John iv. 31, 32. So zealous was he in his Fa-

* *Da mihi Christum, non quæro dona gratiæ, sed Christum. Non quæro promissiones, sed Christum. Non quæro sanctificationem, sed Christum. Ne mihi narra fabulam de mediatore, et officio; narra mihi de Christo.* Commentarius de statu Eccles. Brit. p. 45.

Digitized by Google

ther's work, that his friends "thought that he had been beſides "himſelf," Mark iii. 21. So zealous that "the zeal of God's "houſe eat him up." He flew like a *ſeraphim*, in a flame of zeal, about the work of God. O be not ye like ſnails. What * Auguſtus ſaid of the young Roman, well becomes the true Chriſtian, "whatſoever he doth, he doth it to purpoſe."

Thirdly, Chriſt often thought upon the ſhortneſs of his time, and wrought hard becauſe he knew his working-time would be but little. So you find it, John ix. 4. "I muſt work the works "of him that ſent me, whilſt it is day; the night cometh, when "no man can work." O in this be like Chriſt: rouze your hearts to diligence with this conſideration. If a man have much to write, and be almoſt come to the end of his paper, he will write cloſe, and thereby put much matter in a little room.

Fourthly, He did much work for God in a very ſilent manner: he wrought hard, but did not ſpoil his work, when he had wrought it, by vain oſtentation. When he had expreſſed his charity in his acts of mercy and bounty to men, he would humbly ſeal up the glory of it, with this charge; "ſee ye tell no man of "it," Matt. viii. 4. He affected no popular air. All the angels in heaven could not do what Chriſt did, and yet he called himſelf a *worm*, for all that, Pſal. xxii. 6. O imitate your pattern: Work hard for God, and let not pride blow upon it, when you have done. It is hard for a man to do much, and not value himſelf for it too much.

Fifthly, Chriſt carried on his work for God reſolvedly: no diſcouragements would beat him off, though never any work met with more from firſt to laſt. How did Scribes and Phariſees, Jews, Gentiles, yea, devils ſet upon him, by perſecutions, and reproaches, violent oppoſitions, and ſubtle temptations; but yet, he goes on with his Father's work for all that: he is deaf to all diſcouragements†. So it was foretold of him, Iſa. xlii. 4. "He "ſhall not fail, nor be diſcouraged." O that more of this ſpirit of Chriſt were in his people: O that, in the ſtrength of love to Chriſt, and zeal for the glory of God, you would pour out your hearts in ſervice, and like a river, ſweep down all diſcouragements before you.

Sixthly, He continued working, whilſt he continued living: His life and labour ended together: He fainted not in his work: Nay, the greateſt work he did in this world, was his laſt work. O be like Chriſt in this, be not weary of well-doing: Give not over the work of God, while you can move hand and tongue to

* *Quicquid vult, valde vult.*

† *Savior, ab obice ibit.* i. e. He ſhall proceed the more reſolutely becauſe of obſtacles.

Digitized by Google

promote it, and see that your last works be more than your first. O let the motions of your soul after God be, as all natural motions are, swiftest when neareſt the centre*. Say not it is enough, whilst there is any capacity of doing more for God. In these things, Christians, be like your Saviour.

Inf. 6. Did Christ finish his work? *Look to it Christians, that ye also finish your work which God hath given you to do:* That you may with comfort say, when death approaches, as Christ said, John xvii. 4. "I have glorified thee on earth, I have finished the work "thou gavest me to do; and now, O Father, glorify thou me "with thine own self." Christ had a work committed to him, and he finished it; you have a work also committed to you: O see that you may be able to say, it is finished when your time is so: O work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; and, that I may persuade you to it, I beseech you lay these considerations close to heart.

First, If your work be not done before you die, it can never be done when you are dead. "There is no work nor knowledge, "nor device in the grave, whither thou goest," Eccles. ix. 5, 10. They that go down to the pit cannot celebrate the name of God, Isa. xxxviii. 18. Death binds up the hand from working any more; strikes dumb the tongue that it can speak no more; for then the composition is dissolved. The body, which is the soul's instrument to work by, is broken and thrown aside: the soul itself presented immediately before the Lord, to give an account of all its works. O therefore, seeing the night cometh, when no man can work, as Christ speaks, John ix. 4. make haste and finish your work.

Secondly, If you finish not your work, as the season of working, so the season of mercy will be over at death. Do not think, you that have neglected Christ all your lives, you that could never be persuaded to a laborious holy life, that ever your cries and intreaties shall prevail with God for mercy, when your season is past: No, it is too late; "Will God hear his cry, when "troubles come upon him?" Job xxvii. 9. The season of mercy is then over; *as the tree falls, so it lies:* Then he that is holy shall be holy still, and he that is filthy shall be filthy still. Alas, poor souls, you come too late: "The master of the house is risen up, "and the doors are shut," Luke xix. 42. The season is over: happy had it been if ye had known the day of your visitation.

Lastly, If your work be not finished when you come to die, you can never finish your lives with comfort. He that hath not finish-

* *Si dixisti sufficit, periisti.* If thou once say it is enough, thou art lost.

Digitized by Google

ed his *work* with care, can never finiſh his *courſe* with *joy*. O what a diſmal caſe is that ſoul in, that finds itſelf ſurprized by death in an unready poſture! To lie ſhivering upon the brink of the grave, ſaying, Lord, what will become of me! O I cannot, I dare not die! For the poor ſoul to ſhrink back into the body, and cry, *Oh, it were better for me to do any thing than die.* Why, what's the matter? Oh, I am in a Chriſtleſs ſtate, and dare not go before that awful judgment-ſeat. If I had in ſeaſon made Chriſt ſure, I could then die with peace. Lord, what ſhall I do? How doſt thou like this, reader? Will this be a comfortable cloſe! When one aſked a Chriſtian that conſtantly ſpent ſix hours every day in prayer, why he did ſo? He anſwered, *Oh, I muſt die, I muſt die.* Well then, look to it that you finiſh your work as Chriſt alſo did his.

SERMON XXXVI.

The ſeventh and laſt Word with which CHRIST breathed out his Soul, illuſtrated.

LUKE xxiii. 46.

And when Jeſus had cried with a loud voice, he ſaid, Father, into thy hands I commend my ſpirit; and having ſaid thus, he gave up the ghoſt.

THESE are the laſt of the laſt words of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt upon the croſs, with which he breathed out his ſoul. They were David's words before him, Pſal. xxxi. 5. and for ſubſtance, Stephen's after him, Acts vii. 27. They are words full, both of faith and comfort; fit to be the laſt breathings of every gracious ſoul in this world. They are reſolved into theſe five particulars:

Firſt, The *perſon depoſiting*, or committing: The *Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, who in this, as well as in other things, acted as a common perſon, as the head of the church*. This muſt be remarked carefully, for therein lies no ſmall part of a believer's conſolation: When Chriſt commends his ſoul to God, he doth as it were bind up all the ſouls of the elect in one bundle with it, and ſolemnly preſents them all with his, to his Father's acceptance: To this purpoſe one aptly renders it.

"This commendation made by Chriſt, turns to the ſingular

* He commends not his ſoul to the Father on his own perſonal account, but the ſouls of all the faithful, bound up as it were in one bundle, that they might be kept in ſafety together with his own. *D. Pareus.*

Digitized by Google

" profit and advantage of our ſouls; inaſmuch as Chriſt, by this " very prayer, hath delivered them into his Father's hand, as a " precious treaſure, whenever the time comes that they are to be " looſed from the bodies which they now inhabit*." Jeſus Chriſt neither lived nor died for himſelf, but for believers; what he did in this very act, refers to them as well as to his own ſoul: You muſt look therefore upon Chriſt, in this laſt and ſolemn act of his life, as gathering all the ſouls of the elect together, and making a ſolemn tender of them all, with his own ſoul to God.

Secondly, *The depoſitory*, or perſon to whom he commits this precious treaſure, and that was to his own Father: " Father, in- " to thy hands I commit my ſpirit." Father is a ſweet encouraging, aſſuring title: Well may a ſon commit any concernment, how dear ſoever, into the hands of a father, eſpecially ſuch a ſon into the hands of ſuch a father. " By the hands of the Father into which " he commits his ſoul, we are not to underſtand the naked or " mere power, but the fatherly acceptation and protection of " God†."

Thirdly, *The depoſitum*, or thing committed into this hand, [*my ſpirit*] i. e. my ſoul, now inſtantly departing, upon the very point of ſeparation from my body. The ſoul is the moſt precious of all treaſures, it is called the darling, Pſal. xxxv. 17. or, " the " only one‡," i. e. that which is moſt excellent, and therefore moſt dear and precious: A whole world is but a trifle, if weighed, for the price of one ſoul, Mat. xvi. 26. This ineſtimable treaſure he now commits into his Father's hands.

Fourthly, *The Act* by which he puts it into that faithful hand of the Father, παραθησομαι, I commend§. We rightly render it in the preſent tenſe, though the word be future: For, with theſe words he breathed out his ſoul. This word is of the ſame import with συνιστημι, I preſent, or tender it into thy hands; It was in Chriſt an act of Faith, a moſt ſpecial and excellent act intended as a precedent for all his people.

Fifthly, and laſtly, The laſt thing obſervable is, *the manner* in which he uttered theſe words, and that was with a loud voice;

---

* *Hæc Chriſti commendatio, in animarum noſtrarum commodum cedebat. Quippe quas ille a corpore quod inhabitaverant abſolutas, quaſi quoddam depoſitum, in Dei viventis manu ex oratione tradebat.* Vict. Antioch. in Mark ix.

† *Manus hac patris alias Dei potentiam ſignificant, hic vero paternum Dei præſidium, &c.* Pareus.

‡ יחידתי *Unicam meam.*

§ Παραθησομαι, *i. e.* συνιστημι. Eraſmus obſerves that the word here uſed, ſignifies, I will commend, for even in Pſal. xxxi. 6. whence theſe words of Chriſt are taken, the word אפקיד is read in the future tenſe. *Bez.*

Digitized by Google

he ſpake it that all might hear it, and that his enemies, who judged him now deſtitute and forſaken of God, might be convinced that he was not ſo, but that he was dear to his Father ſtill, and could put his ſoul confidently into his hands: "Father, into thy "hands I commend my ſpirit." Taking then theſe words, not only as ſpoken by Chriſt, the head of all believers, and ſo commending their ſouls to God with his own, but alſo as a pattern, teaching them what they ought to do themſelves, when they come to die. We obſerve,

Doct. *That dying believers are both warranted, and encouraged, by Chriſt's example, believingly to commend their precious ſouls into the hands of God.*

Thus the apoſtle directs the faith of Chriſtians, to commit their ſouls to God's tuition and fatherly protection, when they are either going into priſons, or to the ſtake for Chriſt, 1 Pet. iv. 9. "Let them (ſaith he) that ſuffer according to the will of God, "commit the keeping of their ſouls to him in well-doing, as unto "a faithful Creator."

This propoſition we will conſider in theſe two main branches of it, viz. what is implied and carried in the ſoul's commending itſelf to God by faith, when the time of ſeparation is come. And what warrant or encouragement gracious ſouls have for ſo doing.

Firſt, What is implied in this act of a believer, his commending, or committing, his ſoul into the hands of God at death?

And if it be thoroughly weighed, you will find theſe ſix things, at leaſt, carried in it.

Firſt, It implies this evidently in it *, *That the ſoul outlives the body*, and fails not, as to its being, when its body fails; it feels the houſe in which it dwelt, dropping into ruins, and looks out for a new habitation with God. "Father, into thy hands I commend "my ſpirit." The ſoul underſtands itſelf a more noble being than that corruptible body, to which it was united, and is now to leave in the duſt: it underſtands its relation to the Father of ſpirits, and from him it expects protection and proviſion in its unbodied ſtate; and therefore into his hands it puts itſelf. If it vaniſhed, or breathed into air, and did not ſurvive the body; if it were annihilated at death, it were but a mocking of God to ſay, when we die, "Father, into thy hands I commend my ſpirit."

Secondly, It implies *the ſoul's true reſt to be in God.* See which

* Whoever believes in Chriſt, will not at his death, breathe out his ſoul into the air, but fly to the faithful keeper of ſouls, who keeps in ſafety whatever is committed to him. *Calv.*

Digitized by Google

way its motions and tendencies are, not only in life, but in death alſo. It bends to its God: It repoſes, it even puts itſelf upon its God and Father; "Father, into thy hands." God is the centre of all gracious ſpirits. While they tabernacle here, they have no reſt but in the boſom of their God: When they go hence, their expectation and earneſt deſires are to be with him*. It had been working after God by gracious deſires before, it had caſt many a longing look heaven-ward before; but when the gracious ſoul comes near its God (as it doth in a dying hour) "then it even "throws itſelf into his arms"; as a river, that after many turnings and windings, at laſt is arrived to the ocean; it pours itſelf with a central force into the boſom of the ocean, and there finiſhes its weary courſe. "Nothing but God can pleaſe it in this "world, and nothing but God can give it content when it goes "hence†." It is not the amœnity of the place, whither the gracious ſoul is going, but the boſom of the bleſſed God, who dwells there, that it ſo vehemently pants after; not the Father's houſe, but the Father's arms and boſom: "Father, into thy hands I commend "my ſpirit: Whom have I in heaven but thee? And on earth there "is none that I deſire in compariſon of thee, Pſal. lxxiii. 24, 25.

Thirdly, It alſo implies *the great value believers have for their ſouls.* That is the precious treaſure; and their main ſolicitude and chief care, is to ſee it ſecured in a ſafe hand: "Father, into thy hands I "commit my ſpirit:" They are words ſpeaking the believer's care for his ſoul, that it may be ſafe, whatever becomes of the vile body. A believer when he comes nigh to death, ſpends but few thoughts about his body, where it ſhall be laid, or how it ſhall be diſpoſed of: He truſts that in the hands of friends; but as his great care all along was for his ſoul, ſo he expreſſes it in theſe his very laſt breathings, in which he commends it into the hands of God: It is not, Lord Jeſus receive my body, take care of my duſt, but *receive my ſpirit*: Lord, ſecure the jewel, when the caſket is broken.

Fourthly, Theſe words imply *the deep ſenſe that dying believers have of the great change that is coming upon them by death; when all viſible and ſenſible things are ſhrinking away from them, and failing.* They feel the world and the beſt comforts in it failing: Every creature and creature-comfort failing: For, at death we are ſaid to fail, Luke xvi. 9. Hereupon the ſoul claſps the cloſer about its God, cleaves more cloſe than ever to him: "Father, into thy "hands I commend my ſpirit." Not that a mere neceſſity puts

* *Ruere in amplexus.*

† The place avails nothing, neither does the very pleaſantneſs of heaven itſelf increaſe the happineſs of bleſſed ſpirits, but only as it is God's dwelling place. *Parker de deſcenſu, lib. 2. p. 132.*

Digitized by Google

the ſoul upon God; or that it cleaves to God, becauſe it hath then nothing elſe to take hold on: No, it choſe God for its portion when it was in the midſt of all its outward enjoyments, and had as good ſecurity as other men have for the long enjoyment of them: but my meaning is, that although gracious ſouls have choſen God for their portion, and do truly prefer him to the beſt of their comforts; yet, in this compounded ſtate, it lives not wholly upon its God, but partly by faith, and partly by ſenſe; partly upon things ſeen, and partly upon things not ſeen. The creatures had ſome intereſt in their hearts; alas, too much; but now all theſe are vaniſhing, and it ſees they are ſo. I ſhall ſee man no more, with the inhabitants of the world, (ſaid ſick Hezekiah;) hereupon it turns itſelf from them all, and caſts itſelf upon God for all its ſubſiſtence, expecting now to live upon its God entirely, as the bleſſed angels do; and ſo, in faith, they throw themſelves into his arms: "Father, into thy hands I commend my ſpirit."

Fifthly, It implies the atonement of God, and his full reconciliation to believers, by the blood of the great Sacrifice; elſe they durſt never commit their ſouls into his hands: "For it is a fearful thing to "fall into the hands of the living God," Heb. xii. 29. i. e. of an abſolute God, a God unatoned by the offering up of Chriſt. The ſoul dare no more caſt itſelf into the hand of God, without ſuch an atoning ſacrifice, than it dares approach to a conſuming fire; And, indeed, the reconciliation of God by Jeſus Chriſt, as it is the ground of all our acceptance with God; for we are made accepted in the beloved: So it is plainly carried in the order or manner of the reconciled ſoul's committing itſelf to him: For, it firſt caſts itſelf into the hands of Chriſt, then into the hands of God by him. So Stephen, when dying, "Lord Jeſus receive my "ſpirit:" And by that hand it would be put into his Father's hands.

Sixthly, and laſtly, *It implies both the efficacy and excellency of faith, in ſupporting and relieving the ſoul at a time when nothing elſe is able to do it:* Faith is its conductor, when it is at the greateſt loſs and diſtreſs that ever it met with: it ſecures the ſoul when it is turned out of the body; when heart and fleſh fail, this leads it to the rock that fails not: it ſticks by that ſoul till it ſees it ſafe through all the territories of Satan, and ſafe landed upon the ſhore of glory; and then is ſwallowed up in viſion: many a favour it hath ſhewn the ſoul while it dwelt in its body. The great ſervice it did for the ſoul was in the time of its eſpouſals to Chriſt. This is the marriage-knot, the bleſſed bond of union betwixt the ſoul and Chriſt. Many a relieving ſight, ſecret and ſweet ſupport it hath received from its faith ſince that; but, ſurely, its firſt and laſt works are its moſt glorious works. By faith it firſt ventured itſelf

Digitized by Google

upon Christ; threw itself upon him in the deepest sense of its own vileness and utter unworthiness, when sense, reason, and multitudes of temptations stood by, contradicting and discouraging the soul: by faith it now casts itself into his arms, when it is launching out into vast eternity.

They are both noble acts of faith; but the first, no doubt, is the greatest and most difficult: for, when once the soul is interested in Christ, it is no such difficulty to commit itself into his hands, as when it had no interest at all in him. It is easier for a child to cast himself in the arms of his own father, in distress, than for one that hath been both a stranger and an enemy to Christ, to cast itself upon him, that he may be a father and a friend to it.

And this brings us upon the second enquiry I promised to satisfy, viz.

Secondly, What warrant or encouragement have gracious souls to commit themselves at death into the hands of God? I answer, Much every way; all things encourage and warrant its so doing: For,

First, This God, to whom the believer commits himself at death, is its Creator; the Father of its being: he created and inspired it, and so it hath the relation of a creature to a Creator; yea, of a creature now in distress, to a faithful Creator, 1 Pet. iv. 19. "Let them that suffer according to the will of God, commit the "keeping of their souls to him in well-doing; as to a [faithful "Creator]." It is very true, this single relation, in itself, gives little ground of encouragement, unless the creature had conserved that integrity in which it was originally created*. And they that have no more to plead with God for acceptance, by their relation to him as creatures to a Creator, will doubtless, find that word made good to their little comfort, Isa. xxvii. 11. "It is a people of "no understanding, therefore he that made them, will not have "mercy on them; and he that formed them, will shew them no "favour." But now, grace brings that relation into repute: holiness ingratiates us again, and revives the remembrance of this relation; so that believers only can plead this.

Secondly, As the gracious soul is his creature, so it is his redeemed creature; one that he hath bought, and that with a great price, even with the precious blood of Jesus Christ, 1 Pet. i. 18. This greatly encourages the departing soul, to commit itself into the hands of God; so you find, Psal. xxxi. 5. "Into thy hands do I commend "my spirit, thou hast redeemed it, O Lord God of truth." Surely, this is mighty encouragement, to put itself upon God in a dying hour. Lord, I am not only thy creature, but thy redeemed crea-

* *Hausus ex divina origine.* i. e. Descended of a divine original.

Digitized by Google

ture; one that thou haſt bought with a great price: O, I have coſt thee dear! for my ſake Chriſt came from thy boſom, and is it imaginable, that after that thou haſt in ſuch a coſtly way, even by the expence of the precious blood of Chriſt, redeemed me, thou ſhouldſt at laſt exclude me? Shall the ends both of creation and redemption of this ſoul be loſt together? will God form ſuch an excellent creature as my ſoul is, in which are ſo many wonders of the wiſdom and power of its Creator? will he be content, when ſin has marred the frame, and defaced the glory of it, to recover it to himſelf again, by the death of his own dear Son, and after all this, caſt it away, as if there were nothing in all this? "Father, into thy "hands I commend my ſpirit:" I know thou wilt have a reſpect to the work of thy hands; eſpecially to a redeemed creature, upon which thou haſt expended ſo great ſums of love, which thou haſt bought at ſo dear a rate.

Thirdly, Nay, that is not all; the gracious ſoul may confidently and ſecurely commit itſelf into the hands of God, when it parts with its body at death; not only becauſe it is his creature, his redeemed creature, but becauſe it is his renewed creature alſo: and this lays a firm ground for the believers confidence and acceptance; not that it is the proper cauſe, or reaſon of its acceptance, but as it is the ſoul's beſt evidence, that it is accepted with God, and ſhall not be refuſed by him, when it comes to him at death: for, in ſuch a ſoul there is a double workmanſhip of God, both glorious pieces, though the laſt exceeds in glory. A natural workmanſhip, in the excellent frame of that noble creature, the ſoul; and a gracious workmanſhip upon that again; a new creation upon the old; glory upon glory. "We are his workmanſhip, created in Chriſt Jeſus," Eph. ii. 10. The Holy Ghoſt came down from heaven on purpoſe to create this new workmanſhip; to frame this new creature; and indeed, it is the top and glory of all God's works of wonder in this world; and muſt needs give the believer encouragement to commit itſelf to God, whether at ſuch a time, it ſhall reflect either upon the end of the work, or upon the end of the workman; both which meet in the ſalvation of the ſoul ſo wrought upon, the end of the work is our glory. By this "we are made meet to be partakers of "the inheritance of the ſaints in light," Col. i. 12. It is alſo the deſign and end of him that wrought it, 2 Cor. v. 5. "Now he that "hath wrought us for the ſelf ſame thing, is God." Had he not deſigned thy ſoul for glory, the Spirit ſhould never have come upon ſuch a ſanctifying deſign as this: ſurely it ſhall not fail of a reception into glory, when it is caſt out of this tabernacle: ſuch a work was not wrought in vain, neither can it ever periſh: when once ſanctification comes upon a ſoul, it ſo roots itſelf in the ſoul, that where the ſoul goes, it goes; gifts indeed, they die: all na-

Digitized by Google

tural excellency and beauty, that goes away at death, Job iv. *ult.* but grace aſcends with the ſoul; it is a ſanctified, when a ſeparate ſoul. And can God ſhut the door of glory upon ſuch a ſoul, that by grace is made meet for the inheritance? O, it cannot be!

Fourthly, As the gracious ſoul is a renewed ſoul, ſo it is alſo a ſealed ſoul; God hath ſealed it in this world for that glory, into which it is now to enter at death. All gracious ſouls are ſealed objectively, i. e. they have thoſe works of grace wrought on their ſouls, which do, (as but now was ſaid,) aſcertain and evidence their title to glory; and many are ſealed formally; that is, the Spirit helps them clearly to diſcern their intereſt in Chriſt, and all the promiſes. This both ſecures heaven to the ſoul in itſelf, and becomes alſo an earneſt or pledge of that glory in the unſpeakable joys and comforts that it produces in the ſoul: So you find, 2 Cor. i. 22. "Who hath ſealed us, and given us the earneſt of the "Spirit in our hearts." God's ſealing us gives high ſecurity; his objective ſeal makes it ſure in itſelf, his formal ſeal makes it ſo to us; but, if over and above all this, he will pleaſe, as a fruit of that his ſealing, to give us thoſe heavenly inexpreſſible joys and comforts which are the fruit of his formal ſealing-work, to be an earneſt, a foretaſte and hanſel of that glory, how can the ſoul that hath found all this, fear in the leaſt of a rejection by its God, when at death it comes to him? Surely, if God have ſealed, he will not refuſe you; if he have given his earneſt, he will not ſhut you out; God's earneſt is not given in jeſt.

Fifthly, Moreover, every gracious ſoul may confidently caſt itſelf into the arms of its God, when it goes hence, with "Father into "thy hands I commit my ſpirit." Foraſmuch as every gracious ſoul, is a *ſoul in covenant with God;* and God ſtands obliged, by his covenant and promiſe to ſuch, not to caſt them out, when they come unto him. As ſoon as ever thou became his, by regeneration, that promiſe became thine, Heb. xiii. 5. "I will never leave "you, nor forſake you." And will he leave the ſoul at a time when it never had more need of a God to ſtand by it, than it hath then? Every gracious ſoul is entitled to that promiſe, John xiv. 3. "I will come again, and receive you to myſelf." And will he fail to make it good when the time of the promiſe is come, as at death it is? It cannot be. Multitudes of promiſes; the whole covenant of promiſes, give ſecurity to the ſoul againſt the fears of rejection, or neglect by God. And the ſoul's dependence upon God and his promiſe; its very caſting itſelf upon him, from the encouragement the word gives it, add to the engagement upon God. When he ſees a poor ſoul that he hath made, redeemed, ſanctified, ſealed, and by ſolemn promiſe engaged himſelf to re-

Digitized by Google

ceive, coming to him at death, firmly depending upon his faithfulneſs that hath promiſed, ſaying, as David, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. Though Lord, there be many defects in me, "yet thou haſt made "a covenant with me, well ordered in all things, and ſure; and "this is all my ſalvation, and all my hope." Lord, I am reſolved to ſend out my ſoul in an act of faith: I will venture it upon the credit of thy promiſe. How can God refuſe ſuch a ſoul? How can he put it off, when it ſo puts itſelf upon him?

Sixthly, But this is not all; *the gracious ſoul ſuſtains many intimate and dear relations to that God into whoſe hands it commends itſelf at death.* It is his ſpouſe, and the conſideration of ſuch a day of eſpouſals, may well encourage it to caſt itſelf into the boſom of Chriſt, its head and huſband: it is a member of his body, fleſh and bones, Eph. v. 30. It is his child, and he its everlaſting Father, Iſa. ix. 6. It is his friend. "Henceforth (ſaith Chriſt,) I "call you not ſervants, but friends," John xv. 15. What confidence may theſe, and all other the dear relations Chriſt owns to the renewed ſoul, beget, in ſuch an hour as this is! What huſband can throw off the dear wife of his boſom; who in diſtreſſes caſts herſelf into his arms! What father can ſhut the door upon a dear child that comes to him for refuge, ſaying, Father, into thy hands I commit myſelf!

Seventhly, and laſtly, The unchangeableneſs of God's love to his people, gives confidence they ſhall in no wiſe be caſt out. They know Chriſt is the ſame to them at laſt as he was at firſt: the ſame in the pangs of death, as he was in the comforts of life: having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them to the end, John xiii. 1. He doth not love as the world loves, only in proſperity; but they are as dear to him when their beauty and ſtrength are gone, as when they were in the greateſt flouriſhing. If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord; ſo then, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's, Rom. xiv. 8. Take in all theſe things, and weigh them both apart, and together, and ſee whether they amount not to a full evidence of the truth of this point, that dying believers are both warranted and encouraged to commend their ſouls into the hands of God; whether they have not every one of them cauſe to ſay as the apoſtle did, 2 Tim. i. 12. "I know whom I have believed, and am perſuaded "that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him a-"gainſt that day." The improvements of all this you have in the following practical deductions.

Deduction 1. *Are dying believers only warranted and encouraged thus to commend their ſouls into the hands of God? What a ſad ſtrait then muſt all dying unbelievers be in about their ſouls?* Such ſouls will fall into the hands of God, but that is their miſery, not their privi-

Digitized by Google

lege: they are not put by faith into the hands of *mercy*, but fall by ſin into the hands of *juſtice*: not God, but the devil is their father, John viii. 4. Whither ſhould the child go but to its own father? They have not one of thoſe forementioned encouragements to caſt themſelves into the hands of God, except the naked relation they have to God as their Creator, and that is as good as none, without the new creation. If they have nothing but this to plead for their ſalvation, the devil hath as much to plead as they. It is the new creature that brings the firſt creation into repute again with God.

O diſmal! O deplorable caſe! A poor ſoul is turning out of houſe and home, and knows not where to go: it departs, and immediately falls into the hands of juſtice. The devil ſtands by, waiting for ſuch a ſoul (as a dog for a cruſt) whom God will throw to him. Little! ah little, do the friends of ſuch a one think, whilſt they are honouring his duſt by a ſplendid and honourable funeral, what a caſe that poor ſoul is in that lately dwelt there; and what fearful ſtraits and extremities it is now expoſed to! He may cry, indeed, Lord! Lord! open to me, as in Matt. vii. 22. But to how little purpoſe are theſe vain cries! Will God hear him when he cries? Job xxvii. 9. It is a lamentable caſe!

Deduction 2. *Will God graciouſly accept, and faithfully keep what the ſaints commit to him at death? How careful then ſhould they be to keep what God commits to them, to be kept for him while they live?* You have a great truſt to commit to God when you die, and God hath a great truſt to commit to you whilſt you live; you expect that he ſhould faithfully keep what then you ſhall commit to his keeping, and he expects you ſhould faithfully keep what he now commits to your keeping. O keep what God commits to you, as you expect he ſhould keep your ſouls when you commit them unto him. If you keep his truths, he will keep your ſouls. "Be- "cauſe thou haſt kept the word of my patience, I alſo will keep "thee, &c." Rev. iii. 10. Be faithful to your God, and you ſhall find him faithful to you. None can pluck you out of his hand; ſee that nothing wreſts his truths out of your hands. "If we deny him, he alſo will deny us," 2 Tim. ii. 12. Take heed leſt thoſe eſtates you have gotten as a bleſſing, attending the goſpel, prove a temptation to you to betray the goſpel. "Religion "(faith * one) brings forth riches, but the daughter devours the "mother." How can you expect acceptance with God, who have betrayed his truth, and dealt perfidiouſly with him.

Deduction 3. If believers may ſafely commit their ſouls into the hands of God, *how confidently may they commit all leſſer intereſts and lower concernments into the ſame hand?* Shall we truſt him with our

* *Religio peperit divitias, ſed filia devoravit matrem.*

Digitized by Google

ſouls, and not with our lives, liberties or comforts? Can we commit the treaſure to him and not a trifle? Whatever you enjoy in this world, is but a trifle to your ſouls. Sure, if you can truſt him for eternal life for your ſouls, you may much more truſt him for the daily bread for your bodies. I know it is objected, that God hath made over temporal things to his people upon conditional promiſes, and an abſolute faith can never be grounded upon conditional promiſes.

But what means this objection? Let your faith be but ſuitable to theſe conditional promiſes, i. e. believe they ſhall be made good to you ſo far as God ſees them good for you: do you but labour to come up to thoſe conditions required in you, and thereby God will have more glory, and you more comfort: If your prayers for theſe things proceed from *pure ends*, the glory of God, not the ſatisfaction and gratification of your luſts: If your deſires after them be *moderate* as to the meaſure, content with that proportion the Infinite Wiſdom ſees fitteſt for you: If you take God's way to obtain them, and dare not ſtrain conſcience, or commit a ſin, though you ſhould periſh for want: If you can patiently wait God's time for enlargements from your ſtraits, and not make any ſinful haſte, you ſhall be ſurely ſupplied; and he that remembers your ſouls will not forget your bodies. But we live by ſenſe, and not by faith; preſent things ſtrike our affections more powerfully than the inviſible things that are to come. *The Lord humble his people for this.*

Deduction 4. *Is this the privilege of believers, that they can commit their ſouls to God in a dying hour? Then how precious, how uſeful a grace is faith to the people of God, both living and dying?*

All the graces have done excellently, but faith excels them all: faith is the *Phœnix grace*, the queen of graces: deſervedly it is ſtiled *precious faith*, 2 Pet. i. 1. The benefits and privileges of it in this life are unſpeakable; and as there is no comfortable living, ſo no comfortable dying without it.

Firſt, While we live and converſe here in the world, all our comfort and ſafety is from it; for all our union with Chriſt, the fountain of mercies and bleſſings, is by faith, Eph. iii. 17. "that "Chriſt may dwell in your hearts by faith." No faith, no Chriſt: all our communion with Chriſt is by it: he that cometh to God muſt believe, Heb. xi. 6. The ſoul's life is wrapt up in this communion with God, and that communion in faith. *All communications* from Chriſt depend upon faith; for look, as all communion is founded in union, ſo from our union and communion are all our communications. All communications of quickenings, comforts, joy, ſtrength, and whatſoever ſerves to the well-being of the life of grace, are all through that faith which firſt knits us to Chriſt,

Digitized by Google

and ſtill maintains our communion with Chriſt; believing we rejoice, 1 Pet. i. 8. The inner man is renewed, whilſt we look to the things that are not ſeen, 2 Cor. iv. 18.

Secondly, And as our life, and all the ſupports and comforts of it here, are dependent on faith, ſo you ſee our death, as to the ſafety and comfort of our ſouls then, depends upon our faith: he that hath no faith, cannot commit his ſoul to God, but rather ſhrinks from God. Faith can do many ſweet offices for your ſouls upon a death-bed, when the light of this world is gone, and all joy ceaſes on earth: it can give us ſights of things inviſible in the other world, and thoſe ſights will breathe life into your ſouls, amidſt the very pangs of death.

Reader, do but think what a comfortable foreſight of God, and the joys of ſalvation, will be to thee, when thine eye-ſtrings are breaking; faith can not only ſee that beyond the grave, which will comfort, but it can cleave to its God, and claſp Chriſt in a promiſe, when it feels the ground of all ſenſible comforts trembling, and ſinking under thy feet: "My heart and my fleſh faileth, but "God is the ſtrength (or rock) of my heart, and my portion for "ever." Reeds fail, but the rock is firm footing; yea, and when the ſoul can no longer tabernacle here, it can carry the ſoul to God, caſt it upon him, with "Father, into thy hands I com-"mend my ſpirit." O precious faith!

Deduction 5. *Do the ſouls of dying believers commend themſelves into the hands of God? Then let not the ſurviving relations of ſuch ſorrow as men that have no hope.* A huſband, a wife, a child, is rent by death out of your arms: well, but conſider into what arms, into what boſom they are commended. Is it not better for them to be in the boſom of God, than in yours? Could they be ſpared ſo long from heaven, as to come back again to you but an hour, how would they be diſpleaſed to ſee your tears, and hear your cries and ſighs for them: They would ſay to you as Chriſt ſaid to the daughters of Jeruſalem, "Weep not for me, but weep for your-"ſelves, and for your children." I am in a ſafe hand, I am out of the reach of all ſtorms and troubles. O did you but know what their ſtate is, who are with God, you would be more than ſatisfied about them.

Deduction 6. *Laſtly*, I will cloſe all, with a word of counſel. Is this the privilege of dying believers, to commend their ſouls into the hands of God? *Then as ever you hope for comfort, or peace in your laſt hour, ſee that your ſouls be ſuch, as may be then fit to be commended into the hands of an holy and juſt God:* See that they be holy ſouls; God will never accept them if they be not holy, "Without holi-"neſs no man ſhall ſee God," Heb. xii. 24. "He that hath this "hope, (viz. to ſee God) purifieth himſelf, even as he is pure,"

Digitized by Google

1 John iii. 3. Endeavours after holineſs are inſeparably connected with all rational expectations of bleſſedneſs. Will you put an unclean, filthy, defiled thing into the pure hand of the moſt holy God? O ſee they be holy, and already accepted in the beloved, or woe to them when they take their leave of thoſe tabernacles they now dwell in. The gracious ſoul may confidently ſay then, *Lord Jeſus! into thy hand I commend my ſpirit.* O let all that can ſay ſo then, now ſay,

Thanks be to God for Jeſus Chriſt.

SERMON XXXVII.

CHRIST's Funeral illuſtrated, in its Manner, Reaſons, and excellent Ends.

JOHN xix. 41, 42.

Then took they the body of Jeſus, and wound it in linen clothes, with the ſpices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury. Now in the place where he was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new ſepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid. There laid they Jeſus therefore, becauſe of the Jews preparation-day, for the ſepulchre was nigh at hand.

YOU have heard the laſt words of dying Jeſus commending his ſpirit into his Father's hands. And now the life of the world hangs dead upon a tree. The light of the world, for a time, muffled up in a diſmal cloud. The Sun of Righteouſneſs ſet in the region and ſhadow of death. The Lord is dead, and he that wears the keys of the grave at his girdle, is now himſelf to be locked up in the grave.

All you that are the friends and lovers of Jeſus, are this day invited to his funeral: ſuch a funeral as never was ſince *graves* were firſt digged. "Come, ſee the place where the Lord lay." There are ſix remarkable particulars, about this funeral, in theſe three verſes.

1. The preparations that were made for it, and that was mainly in two particulars, viz. the *begging* and *perfuming* of the body. His body could not be buried, till, by begging, his friends had obtained it as a favour from his judge. The dead body was by law in the power of Pilate, who adjudged it to death, as the bodies of thoſe that are hanged, are in the power of the judge to diſpoſe of them as he pleaſes. And when they had gotten it from Pilate,

Digitized by Google

they wind it in fine linen clothes with spices. But what need of spices to perfume that blessed body? His own love was perfume enough to keep it sweet in the remembrance of his people to all generations: however, by this they will manifest, as far as they are able, the dear affection they have for him.

2. The *Bearers* that carried his body to its grave, Joseph of Arimathea, and Nicodemus, two secret disciples; they were both men of estate and honour; none could imagine that these would have appeared at a time of so much danger, with such boldness for Christ; that ever they would have gone openly, and boldly to manifest their love to Christ, when dead, who were afraid to come to him (except by night) when he was living. But now a spirit of zeal and courage is come upon them, when those that made greater and more open confessions of him are gone.

3. The *Attendants* who followed the hearse, were the women that followed him out of Galilee: among whom the two Marys, and the mother of Zebedee's children (whom Mark calls Salome) are only named.

4. The grave, or sepulchre, where they laid him: It was in Joseph's new tomb, which he had prepared in a garden near unto Golgotha, where our Lord died. Two things are remarkable about this tomb; it was another's tomb, and it was a new tomb. It was another's; for he had not an house of his own to lay his body in when dead. As he lived in other men's houses, so he lay in another man's tomb; and it was a new tomb, wherein never man was yet laid. Doubtless there was much of providence in this; for had any other been laid there before him, it might have proved an occasion both to shake the credit and slur the glory of his resurrection, by pretending it was some former body, and not the Lord's, that rose out of it. In this also divine Providence had a respect to that prophecy, Isa. liii. 9. which was to be fulfilled at his funeral: "He made his grave with the rich, because he had "done no violence," &c.

5. The disposition of the body in that tomb. It is true, there is no mention made of the groans and tears with which they laid him in his sepulchre; yet we may well presume, they were not wanting in plentiful expressions of their sorrow that way; for as they wept, and smote their breasts when he died, Luke xxiii. 48. so no doubt, they laid him with melting hearts, and flowing eyes in his tomb, when dead.

6. And *lastly*, The last remarkable particular in the text, is the solemnity with which his funeral rites were performed, and they were all suitable to his humbled state: it was, indeed, a funeral as decently ordered, as the straits of time, and state of things would then permit; but there was nothing of pomp or outward-

Digitized by Google

ſtate at all obſerved: few marks of honour ſet by men upon it; only the heavens adorned it with divers miraculous works, which in their proper place will be ſpoken to. Thus was he laid in his grave, *where he continued for three incomplete days and nights in the territories of death*, in the land of darkneſs and forgetfulneſs: partly to correſpond with Jonah his type, and partly to aſcertain the world of the reality of his death. Whence our obſervation is,

Doct. *That the dead body of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt was decently interred by a ſmall number of his own diſciples, and continued in the ſtate of the dead for a time.*

This obſervation containing matter of fact, and that ſo plainly and faithfully delivered to us by the pens of the ſeveral evangeliſts, we need do no more, to prepare it for our uſe, than to ſatisfy theſe two enquiries: why had Chriſt any funeral at all, ſince his reſurrection was ſo ſoon to follow his death? And what manner of funeral Chriſt had?

Firſt, Why had Chriſt any funeral at all, ſince he was to riſe again from the dead, within that ſpace of time that other men commonly have to lye by the wall before their interment; and had it continued longer unburied, it could ſee no corruption, having never been tainted by ſin? Why, though there was no need of it at all upon that account that a funeral is needful for other bodies, yet there were theſe four weighty ends and reaſons for it.

Reaſon 1. *Firſt*, It was neceſſary Chriſt ſhould be buried, *to aſcertain his death*; elſe it might have been looked upon as a cheat: for, as they were ready enough to impoſe ſo groſs a cheat upon the world at his reſurrection, "That the diſciples came by night, "and ſtole him away;" much more would they have denied at once the reality, both of his death and reſurrection, had he not been ſo perfumed and interred. But this cut of all pretenſions; for in their kind of embalming, his mouth, ears and noſtrils were all filled with their ſpices and odours; bound up in linen, and laid long enough in the tomb to give full aſſurance to the world of the certainty of his death; ſo that there could be no latent principle of life in him. Now, ſince our eternal life is wrapt up in Chriſt's death, it can never be too firmly eſtabliſhed. To this, therefore, we may well ſuppoſe Providence had ſpecial reſpect in his burial, and the manner of it.

Reaſon 2. *Secondly*, He muſt be buried, *to fulfil the types and prophecies that went before.* His abode in the grave was prefigured by Jonah's abode three days and nights in the belly of the whale, Matt. xii. 40. So muſt the Son of man be three days and three

Digitized by Google

nights in the heart of the earth. Yea, the prophet had described the very manner of his funeral, and, long before he was born, foretold in what kind of tomb his body should be laid, Isa. liii. 9. "He made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his "death:" pointing, by that expression, at this tomb of Joseph, who was a rich man; and the scriptures cannot be broken.

Reason 3. *Thirdly*, He must be buried, *to complete his humiliation;* this being the lowest step he could possibly descend to in his abased state. *They have brought me to the dust of death:* lower he could not be laid; and so low he must lay his blessed head, else he had not been humbled to the lowest.

Reason 4. *Fourthly*, But the great end and reason of his interment was the *conquering of death* in its own dominion and territories; which victory over the grave furnished the saints with that triumphant [illegible] song of deliverance, 1 Cor. xv. 55. "O death! "where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy destruction?" Our graves would not be so sweet and comfortable to us, when we come to lie down in them, if Jesus had not lain there before us and for us. Death is a dragon, the grave its den; a place of dread and terror; but Christ goes into its den, there grapples with it, and for ever overcomes it; disarms it of all its terror; and not only makes it to cease to be *inimical*, but to become exceeding *beneficial* to the saints; a bed of rest, and a perfumed bed; they do but go into Christ's bed, where he lay before them. For these ends he must be buried.

Secondly, Next let us enquire what manner of funeral Christ had?

And if we intently observe it, we shall find many remarkable properties in it.

First, We shall find it to be a very obscure and private funeral. Here was no external pomp or gallantry: Christ affected it not in his life, and it was no way suitable to the ends and manner of his death. Humiliation was designed in his death; and state is inconsistent with such an end: besides, he died upon the tree; and persons so dying, do not use to have much ceremony and state at their funerals. Three things shew it to be a very humble and obscure funeral, as to what concerned outward glory, with which the great ones of the earth are usually interred. For,

1. The dead body of the Lord was not brought from his own house, as other men's commonly are, but from the tree. They begged it of his judge. Had they not obtained this favour from Pilate, it must have been buried in Golgotha; it had been tumbled into a pit digged under the cross.

2. As it was first begged, then buried, so it was attended with

Digitized by Google

a very poor train: a few ſorrowful women followed the bier. Other men are accompanied to their graves by their relations and friends: the diſciples were all ſcattered from him; afraid to own him dying, and dead.

3. And theſe few that were reſolved to give him a funeral, are forced, by reaſon of the ſtraits of time, to do it in great haſte. Time was ſhort; they take the next ſepulchre they can get, and hurry him away that evening into it; for the preparation for the paſſover was at hand. This was the obſcure funeral which the body of the Lord had. Thus was the Prince of the kings of the earth, who has the keys of death and hell, laid into his grave.

Secondly, Yet though men could beſtow little honour upon it, the heavens beſtowed ſeveral marks of honour upon it; adorned it with divers miracles, which wiped off the reproach of his death from him. Theſe miracles were antecedent to his interment, or concomitants of it.

1. There was that extraordinary and preternatural eclipſe of the ſun; ſuch an eclipſe as was never ſeen ſince it firſt ſhone in heaven; the ſun fainted at the ſight of ſuch a rueful ſpectacle, and clothed the whole heaven in black. The ſight of this cauſed a great philoſopher, who was then far from the place where this unparalleled tragedy was acting, to cry out upon the ſight of it, "* Either the God of nature now ſuffers, or the frame of the "world is now diſſolved." The ſame Dionyſius, writing to Apollophanes, a philoſopher, who would not embrace the Chriſtian faith, thus goes about to convince him. "† What thinkeſt "thou, (ſaith he) of the eclipſe when Chriſt was crucified? were "we not both of us at Heliopolis, and ſtanding in the ſame place? "Did we not ſee the moon in a new manner following the ſun; "and not in the conjunction, but from the ninth hour until the "evening, by a reaſon unknown in nature, directly oppoſite to "the ſun? didſt thou not then, being greatly terrified, ſay unto "me, O my Dionyſius, what ſtrange communications of the "heavenly bodies are theſe?"

Such a preternatural eclipſe is remembered in no other hiſtory; for it was not in time of conjunction, but oppoſition, the moon being then at full. From the ſixth to the ninth hour, the ſun and moon were together in the midſt of heaven; but in the evening ſhe appeared in the eaſt, her own place, oppoſite to the ſun. And then miraculouſly returning from eaſt to weſt, did not paſs by

---

* *Aut Deus naturæ patitur, aut mundi machina diſſolvitur.* Dionyſius Areopag.

† Τι λεγεις περι της εν σωτηριω σαυρω εκλειψεως; αμφοτεροι γαρ το τε κατα ηλιουπολιν αμα παροντες, και συνεσωτες παραδοξεως την σεληνην εμπεπτωκυιαν εωρακαμεν, ου γαρ ην συνοδου καιρος, &c. Theod. Metochit. *Hiſt. Rom.* p. 39.

Digitized by Google

the ſun, and ſet in the weſt before it, but kept it company for the ſpace of three hours, and then returned to the eaſt again. And whereas in all other natural eclipſes, the ſhadow always begins on the weſtern parts of the body of the ſun, and that part is alſo firſt cleared; it was quite contrary in this; for though the moon was oppoſite to the ſun, and diſtant from it the whole breadth of heaven, yet with a miraculous ſwiftneſs it overtook the ſun, darkened firſt the eaſtern part of it, and ſoon prevailed over its whole body; which cauſed darkneſs over all the land; i. e. ſay ſome, over the whole earth; or, as others, over the whole land of Jewry; or, as others, over the whole horizon, and all places of the ſame altitude and latitude, which is moſt probable.

Secondly, And as Chriſt's funeral was adorned with ſuch a miraculous eclipſe, which put the heavens and earth into mourning; ſo *the rocks did rend;* the vail of the temple rent in twain from top to bottom; the graves opened, and the dead bodies of many ſaints aroſe and went into the holy city, and were ſeen of many. The *rending of the rocks* was a ſign of God's fierce indignation, Nahum i. 6. and a diſcovery of the greatneſs of his power; ſhewing them what they deſerved, and what he could do to them that had committed this horrid fact; though he rather choſe at this time to ſhew the dreadful effects of it upon inanimate rocks, than rocky-hearted ſinners; but eſpecially it ſerved to convince the world, that it was none other but the Son of God that died; which was farther manifeſted by theſe concomitant miracles.

As for the *rending in twain of the vail*, it was a notable miracle, plainly ſhewing that all ceremonies were now accompliſhed and aboliſhed; no more vails now: as alſo that believers have now moſt free acceſs into heaven. At that very inſtant when the vail rent, the high-prieſt was officiating in the moſt holy place, and the vail which hid him from the reſt of the people, being rent, they might freely ſee him about his work in the holy of holies; a lively emblem of our High-prieſt, whom now we ſee by faith in the heavens, there performing his interceſſion-work for us.

The *opening of the graves*, plainly ſhewed the deſign and end of Chriſt's going into it; that it might not have dominion over the bodies of the ſaints, but being vanquiſhed and deſtroyed by Chriſt, lets go all that are his, whom he ranſomed from the grave, as a prey out of its paws: a ſpecimen whereof was given in thoſe holy ones that roſe at that time and appeared to many in the holy city. Thus was the funeral of our Lord performed by men: Thus was it adorned by miracles from heaven.

Uſe. And now we have ſeen Jeſus interred; he that wears at his girdle the keys of hell and death, himſelf locked up in the grave. What ſhall I ſay of him whom they now laid in the grave? ſha

Digitized by Google

undertake to tell you what he was, what he did, ſuffered, and deſerved? Alas! the tongues of angels muſt pauſe and ſtammer in ſuch a work. I may truly ſay, as Nazianzen ſaid of Bazil, "No "tongue but his own can ſufficiently commend and praiſe him." He is a ſun of righteouſneſs; a fountain of life; a bundle of love. Of him it might be ſaid in that day, Here lies lovely Jeſus, in whom is treaſured up whatſoever an angry God can require for his ſatisfaction, or an empty creature for his perfection; before him was none like him, and after ſhall none ariſe comparable to him. "If every leaf and ſpire of graſs," (ſaith *one,) "nay, all the ſtars, ſands and atoms, were ſo many ſouls and ſeraphims, whoſe love ſhould double in them every moment to all eternity, yet would it fall infinitely ſhort of what is due to his worth and excellency. Suppoſe a creature compoſed of all the choice endowments that ever dwelt in the beſt of men ſince the creation of the world, in whom you find a meek Moſes, a ſtrong Sampſon, a faithful Jonathan, a beautiful Abſalom, a rich and wiſe Solomon; nay, and add to this, the underſtanding, ſtrength, agility, ſplendour, and holineſs of all the angels, it would all amount but to a dark ſhadow of this incomparable Jeſus."

"Who ever weighed Chriſt in a pair of balances?" ſaith another. "Who hath ſeen the foldings and plaits, the heights and depths of that glory that is in him! O for ſuch a heaven, as but to ſtand afar off and ſee, and love, and long for him, while time's thread be cut, and this great work of creation diſſolved!——O, if I could yoke in among the throng of angels and ſeraphims, and now glorified ſaints, and could raiſe a new love-ſong of Chriſt before all the world! I am pained with wondering at new opened treaſures in Chriſt. If every finger, member, bone and joint, were a torch burning in the hotteſt fire in hell, I would they could all ſend out love-praiſes, high ſongs of praiſe for evermore, to that plant of renown, to that royal and high Prince, Jeſus my Lord. But, alas! his love ſwelleth in me, and finds no vent,——I mar his praiſes, nay, I know no compariſon of what Chriſt is, and what he is worth, All the angels, and all the glorified, praiſe him not ſo much as in halves. Who can advance him, or utter all his praiſe? ——O, if I could praiſe him, I would reſt content to die of love for him. O, I would to God I could ſend in my praiſes to my incomparable Well-beloved, or caſt my love-ſongs of that matchleſs Lord Jeſus over the walls, that they might light in his lap before men and angels!———But when I have ſpoken of him till my head rive, I have ſaid juſt nothing; I may begin again. A Godhead, a Godhead, is a world's wonder! Set ten thouſand thouſand

* Mr Jenkin.

Digitized by Google

new-made worlds of angels and elect men, and double them in number ten thousand thousand thousand times: let their hearts and tongues be ten thousand times more agile and large than the hearts and tongues of the seraphims, that stand with six wings before him; when they have said all for the glorifying and praising of the Lord Jesus, they have spoken little or nothing. O that I could even wear out this tongue in extolling his highness! But it is my daily admiration, and I am confounded with his incomparable love."

Thus have his enamoured friends faintly expressed his excellencies; and if they have therein done any thing, they have shewn the impossibility of his due praises.

Come and see, believing souls, look upon dead Jesus in his winding-sheet by faith, and say, Lo, this is he, of whom the church said, "My beloved is white and ruddy;" his ruddiness is now gone, and a death-paleness hath prevailed over all his body, but still as lovely as ever, yea, altogether lovely.

If David, lamenting the death of Saul and Jonathan, said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep over Saul, who clothed you in "scarlet, with other delights; who put ornaments of gold up- "on your apparel;" Much rather may I say, *Children of Zion, weep over Jesus, who clothed you with righteousness, and the garments of salvation.*

This is he who quitted the throne of glory; left the bosom of unspeakable delights; came in a body of flesh, produced in perfect holiness; brake through many and great impediments, (thy great unworthiness, the wrath of God and man,) by the strength of love to bring salvation home to thy soul. Can he that believingly considers this, do less than faint at the sense of that love that brought him to the dust of death, and cry out with that father, "My Lord was crucified!" But I will insist no longer upon generals; but draw down the particulars of Christ's funeral to your use, in the following corrollaries,

Corollary 1. Was Christ buried in this manner? *Then a decent and mournful funeral, where it can be had, is very laudable among Christians.*

I know the souls of the saints have no concernment for their bodies, nor are they solicitous how the body is treated here; yet there is a respect due to them, as they are the temples wherein God hath been served, and honoured by those holy souls that once dwelt in them; as also upon the account of their relation to Christ, even when they lie by the walls; and the glory that will be one day put upon them, when they shall be changed, and made like unto Christ's glorious body. Upon such special accounts as these, their bodies deserve an honourable treatment, as well as upon the

Digitized by Google

account of humanity, which owes this honour to the bodies of all men.

To have no funeral, is accounted a judgment, Eccles. vii. 4. or to be tumbled into a pit without any to lament us, is as lamentable. We read of many solemn and mournful funerals in scripture*, wherein the people of God have affectionately paid their respects and honours to the dust of the saints, as men that were deeply sensible of their worth, and how great a loss the world sustains by their remove. Christ's funeral had as much of decency and solemnity in it, as the time would permit; though he was a stranger to all pomp, both in life and death.

Corol. 2. Did Joseph and Nicodemus so boldly appear at a time of so much danger, to beg the body, and give it a funeral? *Let it be for ever a caution to strong Christians, not to despise or glory over the weak.* You see here a couple of poor, low-spirited, and timorous persons, that were afraid to be seen in Christ's company, when the other disciples professed their readiness to die with him: yet those flee, and these appear for him, when the trial comes indeed. If God desert the strong, and assist the weak, the feeble shall be as David, and the strong as tow. I speak not this to discourage any man from striving to improve inherent graces to the utmost; for it is ordinarily found in experience, that the degrees of assisting grace, are given out according to the measures of inherent grace: but I speak it to prevent a sin incident to strong Christians, which is to despise the weak, which God corrects by such instances and examples as this before us.

Corol. 3. *Hence we may be assisted in discerning the depths of Christ's humiliation for us:* And see from what, to what his love brought him. It was not enough, that he who was in the form of God, became a creature, which was an infinite stoop, nay, to be made a Man, an inferior order of creatures; nay, to be a poor man, to spend his days in poverty and contempt, but also to be a dead corpse for our sakes. *O what manner of love is this!*

Now, the deeper the humiliation of the Son of God was, the more satisfactory to us it must needs be; for as it shews us the heinousness of sin, that deserves all this, so the fulness of Christ's satisfaction, whereby he makes up that breach. O, it was deep humiliation indeed! how unlike himself is he now become! doth he look like the Son of God? What! the Son of God, whom all the angels adore, to be hurried by three or four persons into his grave in an evening! to be carried from Golgotha to the grave in this manner, and there lie as a captive to death for a time! Never

* Gen. xxiii. 2. Gen. xxiv. 19. Gen. l. 10. Numb. xx. 29. 2 Chron. xxxv. 24. John xi. 31. Acts viii. 2.

Digitized by Google

was the like change of conditions; never such an abasement heard of in the world.

Corol. 4. *From this funeral of Christ results the purest, and strongest consolation and encouragement to believers, against the fears of death and the grave.* If this be so, that Jesus hath lain in the grave before you; let me say then to you, as the Lord spake to Jacob, Gen. xlvi. 2, 3. "Fear not to go down into Egypt, for I will go "down with thee, and I will also surely bring thee up again." So here, fear not, believer, to go down to the grave, for God will be with thee there, and will surely bring thee up thence. This consideration that Jesus Christ hath lain in the grave himself, gives manifold encouragements to the people of God, against the terrors of the grave.

First, The grave *received*, but could not *destroy* Jesus Christ: death swallowed him, as the whale did Jonah his type, but could not digest him when it had swallowed him, but quickly delivered him up again. Now Christ's lying in the grave, as the common head and representative of believers, what comfort should this inspire into their hearts: for, as it fared with Christ's body personal, so it shall with Christ's body mystical: it could not retain him; it shall not for ever retain them. This resurrection of Christ out of his grave, is the very ground of our hope for a resurrection out of our graves. "Christ is risen from the dead, and "become the first-fruits of them that slept," 1 Cor. xv. 20.

Secondly, As the union betwixt the body of Christ; and the Divine nature was not dissolved, when that body was laid in the grave, so the union betwixt Christ and believers is not, cannot be dissolved, when their bodies shall be laid in their graves. It is true, the natural union betwixt his soul and body was dissolved for a time; but the *hypostatical union* was not dissolved, no, not for a moment: that body was the body of the Son of God, when it was in the sepulchre. In like manner, the natural union betwixt our souls and bodies is dissolved by death; but the mystical union betwixt us and Christ, yea, betwixt our very dust and Christ can never be dissolved.

Thirdly, As Christ's body, when it was in the grave, did there rest in hope, and was assuredly a partaker of that hope; so it shall fare with the dead bodies of the saints, when they lay them down also in the dust: "My flesh also shall rest in hope," saith Christ, Psal. xvi. 9, 10, 11. In like manner the saints commit their bodies to the dust in hope: "The righteous hath hope in his "death," Prov xiv. 32. And as Christ's hope was not a vain hope, so neither shall their hope be vain.

Fourthly and *lastly*, Christ's lying in the grave before us, hath quite changed, and altered the nature of the grave; so that it is

Digitized by Google

not what it was: it was once a part of the curse. "Dust thou "art, and unto dust thou shalt return," was a part of the threatning, and curse for sin. The grave had the nature and use of a prison, to keep the bodies of sinners against the great assizes, and then deliver them up into the hands of a great and terrible God; but now it is no prison, but a bed of rest: yea, and a perfumed bed, where Christ lay before us. Which is a sweet consideration of the grave indeed; "They shall enter into peace, they shall rest in "their beds," Isa. lvii. 2. O then let not believers stand in fear of the grave. He that hath one foot in heaven, need not fear to put the other into the grave. "Though I walk through the "valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art "with me," Psal. xxiii. 4.

Indeed, the grave is a terrible place to them that are out of Christ: death is the Lord's serjeant to arrest them; the grave is the Lord's prison to secure them. When death draws them into the grave, it draws them thither as a lion doth his prey into the den to devour it. So you read, Psal. xlix. 14. "Death shall feed "(or prey) upon them." Death there reigns over them in its full power, Rom. v. 14. And though at last it shall render them again to God, yet it were better for them to lie everlastingly where they were, than to rise to such an end; for they are brought out of their graves, as a condemned prisoner out of the prison, to go to execution. But the case of the saints is not so; the grave (thanks be to our Lord Jesus Christ!) is a privileged place to them, whilst they sleep there; and when they awake, it will be with singing. When they awake, they shall be satisfied with his likeness.

Corollary 5. Lastly, *Since Christ was laid in his grave, and his people reap such privileges by it; as ever you expect rest or comfort in your graves,* see that you get union with Christ now.

It was an ancient custom of the Jews, to put rich treasures into the graves with their friends, as well as to bestow much upon their sepulchres. It is said, Hircanus opened David's sepulchre, and took out of it three thousand talents of gold and silver. And to this sense many interpret that act of the Chaldeans, Jer. viii. 1. "At that time, saith the Lord, they shall bring out the bones of "the kings of Judah, and the bones of his princes, &c. And they "shall spread them before the sun and moon," &c. This is rather conceived to be an act of covetousness than cruelty: they shall ransack their graves for the treasure that is hid there among their bones. It is possible the case so stands with many of you, that you have no great matter to bestow upon your funerals, nor are they like to be splendid; no stately monuments; no hidden treasure; but if Christ be yours, you carry that with you to your graves, which is better than all the gold and silver in the world. What

Digitized by Google

would you be the better if your coffin were made of beaten gold, or your grave-ſtone ſet thick with glittering diamonds? But if you die in the Lord, i. e. intereſted in and united to the Lord, you ſhall carry ſix grounds of comfort with you to your graves, the leaſt of which is not to be purchaſed with the wealth of both the Indies.

Firſt, The firſt ground of comfort which a believer carries with him to the grave, is, that the covenant of God holds firmly with his very duſt, all the days of its appointed time in the grave. So much Chriſt tells us, Matt. xxii. 31, 32. "I am the God of "Abraham, and the God of Iſaac, and the God of Jacob: God "is not the God of the dead, but of the living;" *q. d.* Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob are naturally dead; but inaſmuch as God, long after their deaths, proclaimed himſelf their God ſtill, therefore they are all alive, *fœderally* alive to God: they live, i. e. their covenant-relation lives ſtill. "Whether we live, or whether we "die, (ſaith the apoſtle) we are the Lord's," Rom. xiv. 7, 8, 9. Now, what an encouragement is here! I am as much the Lord's in the ſtate of the dead, as I was in the ſtate of the living: death puts an end to all other relations and bonds, but the bond of the covenant rots not in the grave: that duſt is ſtill the Lord's.

Secondly, As God's covenant with our very bodies is indiſſolvable, ſo God's love to our very duſt, is inſeparable. "I am the God "of Abraham." God looks down from heaven into the graves of his ſaints with delight, and looks on that pile of duſt with complacency, which thoſe that once loved it cannot behold without loathing. The apoſtle is expreſs; Rom. viii. 33. that death ſeparates not the believer from the love of God. As at firſt it was not our natural comelineſs or beauty that drew, or engaged his love to us; ſo neither will he ceaſe to love us when that beauty is gone, and we become objects of loathing to all fleſh. When a huſband cannot endure to ſee a wife, or a wife her huſband; but ſaith of them that were once dear and pleaſant, as Abraham of his beloved Sarah, "Bury my dead out of my ſight;" yet then the Lord delights in it as much as ever. The goldſmith does not value the duſt of his gold, as God values the duſt of his ſaints, for all theſe precious particles are united to Chriſt.

Thirdly, As God's love will be with you in the grave, ſo God's providence ſhall take order about your graves, when they ſhall be digged for you. And be ſure he will not dig your graves till you are fit to be put into them: he will bring you thither in the beſt time; Job v. 26. "Thou ſhalt come to thy grave as a ſhock of "corn in its ſeaſon:" you ſhall be ripe and ready before God houſe you there. It is ſaid of David, that "after he had ſerved

Digitized by Google

" his generation by the will of God, he fell aſleep," Acts xiii. 36. O what a holy and wiſe will is that will of God, that ſo orders our death! And how equal is it, that our will ſhould be concluded by it?

Fourthly, If you be in Chriſt, as God's covenant holds with you in the grave, his love is inſeparable from your duſt, his providence ſhall give order when it ſhall be digged for you, ſo, in the next place, his pardons have looſed all the bonds of guilt from you, before you lie down in the grave: ſo that you ſhall not die in your ſins. Ah, friends, what a comfort is this! that you are the Lord's free-men in the grave! ſin is a bad bed-fellow, and a worſe grave-fellow. It is a grievous threatening, John viii. 24. " Ye ſhall die " in your ſins." Better be caſt alive into a pit among dragons and ſerpents, than dead in your graves among your ſins. O what a terrible word is that, Job xx. 11. " His bones are full of the ſins " of his youth, which ſhall lie down with him in the duſt!" But from the company of ſin, in the grave, all the ſaints are delivered. God's full, free, and final pardons have ſhut guilt out of your graves.

Fifthly, Whenever you come to your graves, you ſhall find the enmity of the grave ſlain by Chriſt: it is no enemy; nay, you will find it friendly, a privileged place to you: it will be as ſweet to you that are in Chriſt, as a ſoft bed in a ſtill quiet chamber is to one that is weary and ſleepy. Therefore, it is ſaid, 1 Cor. iii. 21, 22. " Death is yours;" yours is a privilege; your friend: there you ſhall find ſweet reſt in Jeſus; be hurried, pained, troubled no more.

Sixthly, To conclude: if in Chriſt, know this for your comfort, that your own Lord Jeſus Chriſt keeps the keys of all the chambers of death: and as he unlocks the door of death, when he lets you in, ſo he will open it again for you when you awake, to let you out; and from the time he opens to let you in, till the time he opens to let you out, he himſelf wakes and watches by you while you ſleep there. " I (ſaith he) have the keys of death," Rev. i. 18. O then, as you expect peace or reſt in the chambers of death, get union with Chriſt. A grave with Chriſt is a comfortable place.

Digitized by Google

SERMON XXXVIII.

Wherein four weighty Ends of CHRIST's Humiliation are opened, and particularly applied.

ISA. liii. 2.

He ſhall ſee the travail of his ſoul, and be ſatisfied.

WE are now arrived at the laſt particular place which we deſigned to ſpeak to in Chriſt's *ſtate of humiliation*, namely, the *deſigns* and bleſſed *ends* for which he was ſo deeply abaſed. It is inconſiſtent with the prudence of a common agent, to be at vaſt expences of time, pains, and coſt, and not to propound to himſelf a deſign worthy of all thoſe expences. And it is much leſs imaginable, that Chriſt ſhould ſo ſtupendouſly abaſe himſelf, by ſtooping from the boſom of his Father to the ſtate of the dead, where our laſt diſcourſe left him, if there had not been ſome excellent and glorious thing in his eye, the attainment whereof might give him a content and ſatisfaction, equivalent to all the ſorrows and abaſements he endured for it.

And ſo much is plainly held forth in this ſcripture, "He ſhall "ſee the travail of his ſoul, and be ſatisfied." In which words three things fall under our conſideration.

Firſt, The travailing pangs of Chriſt. So the agonies of his ſoul and torments of his body are fitly called, not only becauſe of the ſharpneſs and acuteneſs of them, being in that reſpect like birth-pangs of a travailing woman, for ſo this * word ſignifies, but alſo becauſe they fore-run, and make way for the birth, which abundantly recompenſes all thoſe labours. I ſhall not here inſiſt upon the pangs and agonies endured by Chriſt in the garden, or upon the croſs, which the prophet ſtiles "the travail of his ſoul," having, in the former ſermons, opened it largely in its particulars, but paſs to the

Second Thing conſiderable in theſe words, and that is the *aſſured fruits* and effects of this his travail; *he ſhall ſee the travail of his ſoul.* By ſeeing, underſtand the fruition, obtainment, or enjoyment of the end of his ſufferings. He ſhall not ſhed his blood upon an hazard; his deſign ſhall not miſcarry; but he ſhall certainly ſee the ends he aimed at, accompliſhed.

And *Thirdly*, This ſhall yield him great ſatisfaction: as a

* עמל, πονω, This word ſignifies both the birth and pain attending it.—*Strigel.*

Digitized by Google

" woman forgets her ſorrow, for joy that a man is born into the " world," John xvi. 21. he ſhall ſee it, and be *ſatisfied.* As God, when he had finiſhed the work of creation, viewed that his work with pleaſure and ſatisfaction; ſo doth our exalted Redeemer, with great contentment, behold the happy iſſues of his hard ſufferings. It affords pleaſure to a man to ſee great affairs, by orderly conduct, brought to happy iſſues. Much more doth it yield delight to Jeſus Chriſt, to ſee the reſults of the moſt profound wiſdom and love, wherein he carried on redemption-work. All runs into this doctrine,

Doct. *That all the bleſſed deſigns and ends for which the Lord Jeſus Chriſt humbled himſelf to the death of the croſs, ſhall certainly be attained, to his full content and ſatisfaction.*

My preſent buſineſs is not to prove, that Chriſt ſhall certainly obtain what he died for; nor to open the great ſatisfaction and pleaſure which will ariſe to him out of thoſe iſſues of his death, but to point at the principal ends of his death; making ſome brief improvements as we paſs along.

Firſt, Then let us enquire into the deſigns and ends of Chriſt's humiliation, at leaſt the main and principal ones; and we ſhall find, that as the ſprinkling of the typical blood in the Old Teſtament was done for four weighty ends or uſes, anſwerably, the precious and invaluable blood of the Teſtator and ſurety of the New Teſtament is ſhed for four weighty ends alſo.

Firſt, That blood was ſhed and applied to *deliver* from danger; Exod. xii. 13. " And the blood ſhall be to you for a * token upon " the houſes where you are; and when I ſee the blood, I will paſs " over you: and the plague ſhall not be upon you, to deſtroy you, " when I ſmite the land of Egypt."

Secondly, The blood that was ſhed to make an *atonement* betwixt God and the people; Lev. iv. 20. " And he ſhall do with the " bullock as he did with the bullock for a ſin-offering; ſo ſhall he " do with this; and the prieſt ſhall make an atonement for them, " and it ſhall be forgiven them."

Thirdly, That blood was ſhed to *purify* perſons from their ceremonial pollutions, Lev. xiv. 6, 7. " He ſhall dip the cedar-wood, " and ſcarlet, and hyſſop, with the living bird, in the blood of " the bird that was killed over the running water, and he ſhall " ſprinkle upon him that is to be cleanſed from the leproſy ſeven

* The Jews implicitly acknowledged by this ceremony, that they were to be liberated from eternal death by the blood of the Meſſiah. *Vatab.*

Digitized by Google

" times*; and shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the living " bird loose in the open field."

Fourthly, That † blood was shed to *ratify* and confirm the testament or covenant of God with the people, Exod. xxiv. 8. " And " Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, " Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made " with you concerning all these words." These were the four main ends for shedding and sprinkling that typical blood. Suitably, there are four principal ends for shedding and applying Christ's blood. As that typical blood was shed to deliver from danger, so this was shed to deliver from wrath, *even the wrath to come*. That was shed to make an atonement, so was this. That was shed to purify persons from uncleanness, so was this. That was shed to confirm the Testament, so was this. As will appear in the following particulars more at large.

First, One principal design and end of shedding the blood of Christ was *to deliver his people from danger, the danger of that wrath which burns down to the lowest hell.* So you find, 1 Thess. i. 10. " Even Jesus who delivered us from wrath to come." Here our misery is both *specified* and aggravated. Specified, in calling it *wrath*, a word of deep and dreadful signification. The damned best understand the importance of that word. And *aggravated*, in calling it *wrath to come*, or coming wrath. Wrath to come implies both the *futurity* and *perpetuity* of this wrath. It is wrath that shall certainly and inevitably come upon sinners. As sure as the night follows the day; as sure as the winter follows the summer, so shall wrath follow sin, and the pleasures thereof. Yea, it is not only certainly future, but when it comes it will be abiding wrath, or wrath still coming. When millions of years and ages are past and gone, this will still be *wrath to come*. Ever coming as a river ever flowing.

Now, from this *wrath to come*, hath Jesus delivered his people by his death. For that was the price laid down for their redemption from the wrath of the great and terrible God, Rom. v. 9. " Much more then, being justified by his blood, we shall be " saved from wrath through him." The blood of Jesus was the price that ransomed man from this wrath. And it was shed not only to deliver them from *wrath to come*, but to deliver them freely, fully, distinguishingly, and wonderfully from it.

First, *Freely*, by his own voluntary interposition and susception of the mediatorial office, moved thereunto by his own bowels of

* *Seven times*, signifies perfect expiation; this number was consecrated to denote perfection. *Menoch.*

† The *shedding* and *sprinkling* of *blood* signifies that the covenant would be sure and stable, even with the hazard of life. *Rivet.*

Digitized by Google

compaſſion, which yearned over his elect in their miſery*. The ſaints were once a loſt generation, that had ſold themſelves, and their inheritance alſo; and had not wherewithal to redeem either: but they had a near kinſman (even their elder brother by the mother's ſide) to whom the right of redemption did belong; who being a mighty man of wealth, the heir of all things, undertook to be their *Goel;* and out of his own proper ſubſtance to redeem both them and their inheritance. Them, to be his own inheritance, Eph. i. 10. and heaven, to be theirs, 1 Pet. i. 4. All this he did moſt freely, when none made ſupplication to him. No ſighing of the priſoners came before him. He deſigned it for us before we had a being. And when the purpoſes of his grace were come to their parturient fulneſs, then did he freely lay out the infinite treaſures of his blood to purchaſe our deliverance from wrath.

Secondly, Chriſt by death hath delivered his people *fully*. A full deliverance it is, both in reſpect of *time* and *degrees*. A full deliverance in reſpect of *time*. It was not a *reprieve*, but a *deliverance*. He thought it not worth the ſhedding of his blood to reſpite the execution for a while. Nay, in the procurement of their eternal deliverance from wrath, and in the purchaſe of their eternal inheritance, he hath but an even bargain, not a jot more than his blood was worth. Therefore is he become "the author of "eternal ſalvation to them that obey him," Heb. v. 9. And as it is full in reſpect of *time*, ſo likewiſe in reſpect of *degrees*. He died not to procure a mitigation or abatement of the rigour or ſeverity of the ſentence, but to reſcue his people fully from all degrees of wrath. So that there is no condemnation to them that are in Chriſt, Rom. viii. 1. All the wrath of God to the laſt drop, was ſqueezed out into that bitter cup which Chriſt drank off, and wrung out the very dregs thereof.

Thirdly, This deliverance obtained for us by the death of Chriſt, is a *ſpecial* and diſtinguiſhing deliverance. Not common to all, but peculiar to ſome; and they by nature no better than thoſe that are left under wrath. Yea, as to natural diſpoſition, moral qualifications, and external endowments, oftentimes far inferior to them that periſh. How often do we find a moral righteouſneſs, an harmleſs innocency, a pretty ingenuity, a readineſs to all offices of love, in them that are notwithſtanding left under the dominion of other luſts, and under the damning ſentence of the law; whilſt on the other ſide, proud, peeviſh, ſenſual, moroſe, and unpoliſhed natures, are choſen to be the ſubjects of this ſalvation? "You ſee "your calling, brethren, 1 Cor. i. 26.

* See Mr Caſe's Mount Piſgah, p. 85.

Digitized by Google

Fourthly and *laſtly*, It is a *wonderful* ſalvation. It would weary the arm of an angel to write down all the wonders that are in this ſalvation. That ever ſuch a deſign ſhould be laid, ſuch a project of grace contrived in the heart of God, who might have ſuffered the whole ſpecies to periſh. That it ſhould only concern man, and not the angels, by nature more excellent than us; that Chriſt ſhould be pitched upon to go forth upon this glorious deſign. That he ſhould effect it in ſuch a way, by taking our nature and ſuffering the penalty of the law therein. That our deliverance ſhould be wrought out and finiſhed when the Redeemer and his deſign ſeemed both to be loſt and periſhed. Theſe with many more are ſuch wonders as will take up eternity itſelf to ſearch, admire, and adore them.

Before I part from this firſt end of the death of Chriſt, give me leave to deduce two uſeful corollaries from it, and then proceed to a ſecond.

Coroll. 1. Hath Chriſt by death delivered his people from the wrath to come? *How ungrateful and diſingenuous a thing muſt it be then for thoſe that have obtained ſuch a deliverance as this, to repine and grudge at thoſe light afflictions they ſuffer for a moment upon Chriſt's account in this world!*

Alas! What are theſe ſufferings, that we ſhould grudge at them? Are they like thoſe which the Redeemer ſuffered for our deliverance? Did ever any of us endure for him what he endured for us? Or is there any thing you can ſuffer for Chriſt in this world, comparable to this *wrath to come*, which you muſt have endured, had he not, by the price of his own blood, reſcued you from it.

Reader, wilt thou but make the compariſon in thine own thoughts, in the following particulars, and then pronounce when thou haſt duly compared. *Compare.*

Firſt, What is the wrath of man to the wrath of God? What is the arm of a creature to the anger of a Deity? Can man thunder with an arm like God? *The Natures.*

Secondly, What are the ſufferings of the vile body here, to the tortures of a ſoul and body in hell? The torments of the ſoul are the very ſoul of torments. *Subjects.*

Thirdly, What are the troubles of a moment to that wrath, which, after millions of years are gone, will ſtill be called *wrath to come?* O what compariſon betwixt a point of haſty time, and the interminable duration of vaſt eternity! *Duration.*

Fourthly, What compariſon is there betwixt the intermitting ſorrows and ſufferings of this life, *Continuity.*

Digitized by Google

and the continued uninterrupted *wrath to come?* Our troubles here are not constant, there are gracious relaxations, lucid intervals here; but the wrath to come allows not a moment's ease or mitigation.

Fifthly, What light and easy troubles are those, which, being put into the rank and order of adjuvant causes, work under the influence and blessing of the first cause, to the everlasting good of them that love God, compared with that *wrath to come*, out of which no good effects or issues are possible to proceed to the souls on which it lies? *Designs.*

Sixthly, and lastly, How much more comfortable is it, to suffer in fellowship with Christ and his saints for righteousnèss sake, than to suffer with devils and reprobates for wickedness sake? Grudge not then, O ye that are delivered by Jesus from wrath to come, at any thing ye do suffer, or shall suffer from Christ, or for Christ in this world. *And companions.*

Corol. 2. If Jesus Christ hath delivered his people from the wrath to come, *how little comfort can any man take in his present enjoyments and accomodations in the world, whilst it remains a question with him, whether he be delivered from the wrath to come?* It is well for the present, but will it be so still? Man is a prospecting creature, and it will not satisfy him that his present condition is comfortable, except he have some hopes it shall be so hereafter. It can afford a man little content that all is easy and pleasant about him now, whilst such passages and terrible hints of *wrath to come* are given him by his own conscience daily. O, methinks such a thought as this, *what if I am reserved for the wrath to come?* should be to him, as the fingers appearing upon the plaster of the wall were to Belteshazzar, in the height of a frolic*. It is a custom with some of the Indians, when they have taken a prisoner (whom they intend not presently to eat) to bring him with great triumph into the village, where he dwelleth that hath taken him; and placing him in the house of one that was slain in the wars, as it were to re-celebrate his funeral, they give him his wives or sisters to attend on him, and use at his pleasure: they apparel him gorgeously and feed him with all the dainty meats that may be had; affording him all the pleasure that can be devised; when he hath passed certain months in all these pleasures, and (like a capon) is made fat with delicate fare, they assemble themselves upon some festival day, and in great pomp bring him to the place of execution, where they kill and eat him.

Such are all the pleasures and enjoyments of the wicked, which feed them for the day of slaughter. How little stomach can a man

* Sir R. Barkley, on the felicity of Man, p. 12, 13.

Digitized by Google

have to thoſe dainties that underſtands the end and meaning of them! Give not ſleep therefore to thine eyes, reader, till thou haſt got good evidence, that thou art of that number whom *Jeſus hath delivered from the wrath to come.* Till thou canſt ſay, he is a Jeſus to thee. This may be made out to thy ſatisfaction three ways.

Firſt, *If Jeſus have delivered thee from ſin, the cauſe of wrath, thou mayeſt conclude he hath delivered thee from wrath, the effect and fruit of ſin.* Upon this account the ſweet name of Jeſus, was impoſed upon him, Mat. i. 21. "Thou ſhalt call his name Jeſus, "for he ſhall ſave his people from their ſins." Whilſt a man lies under the dominion and guilt of ſin, he lies expoſed to *wrath to come;* and when he is delivered from the guilt and power of ſin, he is certainly delivered from the danger of this coming wrath. Where ſin is not imputed, wrath is not threatened.

Secondly, *If thy ſoul do ſet an ineſtimable value on Jeſus Chriſt, and be endeared to him upon the account of that inexpreſſible grace manifeſted in this deliverance, it is a good ſign thy ſoul hath a ſhare in it.* Mark what an epithet the ſaints give Chriſt upon this account, Col. i. 12, 13. "Giving thanks to the Father, who hath delivered "us from the power of darkneſs, and tranſlated us into the king-"dom of his [dear] Son." Chriſt is therefore *dear*, and dear beyond all compare to his ſaved ones. I remember it is ſtoried of the poor enthralled Grecians, that when * Titus Flaminius had reſtored their ancient liberties, and proclamation was to be made in the market-place by an herald; they ſo preſſed to hear it, that the herald was in great danger of being ſtifled and preſſed to death among the people; but when the proclamation was ended, there were heard ſuch ſhouts and joyful acclamations, that the very birds of the air fell down aſtoniſhed with the noiſe, while they continued to cry, Σωτηρ, Σωτηρ, a Saviour, a Saviour; and all the following night they continued dancing and ſinging about his pavilion.

If ſuch a deliverance ſo endeared them to Titus, how ſhould the great deliverance from wrath to come, endear all the redeemed to love their dear Jeſus? This is the native effect of mercy upon the ſoul that hath felt it.

Thirdly, To conclude, *A diſpoſition and readineſs of mind to do, or endure any thing for Chriſt's ſake, upon the account of his deliverance from the wrath to come; is a good evidence you are ſo delivered,* Col. i. 10, 11. "That we may walk worthy of the Lord to all pleaſing, "being fruitful in every good work." There is readineſs to do for Chriſt. "Strengthened with all might, according to his glori-

* *Plutarch. in vita T. Flaminii.*

Digitized by Google

" ous power, unto all patience and long-ſuffering with joyfulneſs." There is a chearful readineſs to endure any thing for Chriſt. And how both theſe flow from the ſenſe of this great deliverance from wrath, the 12th verſe will inform you, which was but now cited. Oh then, be ſerious and aſſiduous in the reſolution of this grand taſe. Till this be reſolved, nothing can be pleaſant to thy ſoul.

End 2. As the typical blood was ſhed and ſprinkled to deliver from danger, ſo it was ſhed to make *atonement*, Lev. iv. 20. " He " ſhall expiate (we tranſlate *atone*) the ſin." The word imports both. And the true meaning is, that by the blood of the bullock, all whoſe efficacy ſtood in its relation to the blood of Chriſt, ſignified and ſhadowed by it, the people, for whom it was ſhed, ſhould be reconciled to God, by the expiation and remiſſion of their ſins. And what was ſhadowed in this typical blood, was really deſigned and accompliſhed by Jeſus Chriſt, in the ſhedding of his blood.

Reconciliation of the elect to God, is therefore another of thoſe beautiful births which Chriſt travailed for. So you find it expreſsly, Rom. v. 10. " If when we were enemies, we were re- " conciled to God by the death of his Son." This [if] is not a word of doubting, but argumentation. The apoſtle ſuppoſes it is a known truth, or principle yielded by all Chriſtians, that the death of Chriſt was to reconcile the elect to God. And again he affirms it with like clearneſs, Col. i. 20. " And having made " peace by the blood of his croſs, by him to reconcile all things." And that this was a main and principle end deſigned both by the Father and Son in the humiliation of Chriſt, is plain from 2 Cor. v. 18, 19. " God was in Chriſt reconciling the world to himſelf." God filled the humanity with grace and authority. The Spirit of God was in him to qualify him. The authority of God was in him by commiſſion, to make all he did valid. The grace and love of God to mankind was in him, and one of the principal effects in which it was manifeſted, was this deſign upon which he came, viz. to reconcile the world to God. Upon which ground Chriſt is called the " propitiation for our ſins," 1 John ii. 2. " * Now *reconciliation* or atonement is nothing elſe but the making " up of the ancient friendſhip betwixt God and men which ſin " had diſſolved, and ſo to reduce theſe enemies into a ſtate of " concord, and ſweet agreement." And the means by which this bleſſed deſign was effectually compaſſed, was by the death of Chriſt, which made complete ſatisfaction to God, for the wrong he had done him. There was a breach made by ſin betwixt God

* *Reconciliare nihil aliud eſt quam amicitiam offenſione aliqua gravi diremptam reſarire, et ſic inimicos in priſtinam concordiam reducere.* Daven. in Col. i. 20.

Digitized by Google

and angels, but that breach is never to be repaired or made up; since, as Christ took not on him their nature, so he never intended to be a mediator of reconciliation betwixt God and them. That will be an eternal breach. But that which Christ designed, as the end of his death, was to reconcile God and man. Not the whole *species*, but a certain *number*, whose names were given to Christ. Here I must briefly open, 1. How Christ's death reconciles. 2. Why this reconciliation is brought about by his death, rather than any other way. 3. What are the articles according to which it is made. And 4. What manner of reconciliation this is.

First, How Christ reconciles God and man by his death. And it must needs be by the satisfaction his death made to the justice of God for our sins. And so, reparation being made, the enmity ceases. Hence it is said, Isa. liii. 5. "The chastisement of our "peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed." That is (as our English Annotators well explain it) he was chastised to procure our peace, by removal of our sins, that set God and us asunder, the guilt thereof being discharged with the price of his blood.

Now this reconciliation is made and continued betwixt God and us, three ways; namely, by the *oblation* of Christ, which was the price that procured it, and so we were *virtually* or meritoriously reconciled. By the *application* of Christ and his benefits to us through faith, and so we are *actually* reconciled. And by the virtual *continuation* of the sacrifice of Christ in heaven, by his potent and eternal *intercession*, and so our state of reconciliation is *confirmed*, and all future breaches prevented. But all depends, as you see, upon the death of Christ. For had not Christ died, his death could never be applied to us, nor pleaded in heaven for us. How the death of Christ meritoriously procures our reconciliation, is evident from that fore-cited scripture, Rom. v. 10. "When we were "enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son," i. e. Christ's death did meritoriously or virtually reconcile us to God, who, as to our state, were enemies long after that reconciliation was made. That the *application* of Christ to us by faith, makes that virtual reconciliation to become actual, is plain enough from Eph. ii. 16, 17. "And that he might reconcile both unto "God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby. "And came and preached peace to you that were afar off, and to "them that were nigh. Now therefore (as it is added, verse 19.) "Ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens "with the saints," &c. And that this state of friendship is still *continued* by Christ's intercession within the vail, so that there can be no breaches made upon the state of our peace, notwithstanding all the daily provocations we give God by our sins, is the comforta-

Digitized by Google

ble truth which the apoſtle plainly aſſerts, after he had given a neceſſary caution to prevent the abuſe of it, in 1 John ii. 1, 2. "My "little children, theſe things I write unto you that ye ſin not; "and if any man ſin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Je"ſus Chriſt the righteous; and he is the propitiation," &c. Thus Chriſt reconciles us to God by his death.

Secondly, And if you enquire why this reconciliation was made by the death of Chriſt, rather than any other way, ſatisfaction is at hand, in theſe two anſwers.

Firſt, That we can imagine no other way by which it could be compaſſed. And,

Secondly, If God could have *reconciled* us as much by another way, yet he could not have *obliged* us ſo much by doing it in another way, as he hath by doing it this way. Surely, none but he that was God manifeſted in our fleſh could offer a ſacrifice of ſufficient value to make God amends for the wrong done him by one ſin, much leſs for all the ſins of the elect. And how God ſhould (eſpecially after a peremptory threatening of death for ſin) re-admit us into favour without full ſatisfaction, cannot be imagined. He is indeed inclined to acts of mercy, but none muſt ſuppoſe him to exerciſe one attribute in prejudice to another. That his *juſtice* muſt be *eclipſed*, whilſt his *mercy ſhines*. But allow that Infinite Wiſdom could have found out another means of reconciling us as much, can you imagine, that in any other way he could have obliged us as much, as he hath done by reconciling us to himſelf by the death of his own Son? It cannot be thought poſſible. This therefore was the moſt effectual, juſt, honourable, and obliging way to make up the peace betwixt him and us.

Thirdly, This reconciliation, purchaſed by the blood of Chriſt, is offered unto men by the goſpel, upon certain articles and conditions; upon the performance whereof it actually becomes theirs; and without which, notwithſtanding all that Chriſt hath done and ſuffered, the breach ſtill continues betwixt them and God. And let no man think this a derogation from the freeneſs and riches of grace, for theſe things ſerve ſingularly to illuſtrate and commend the grace of God to ſinners.

As he conſulted his own glory, in the terms on which he offers us our peace with him; ſo it is his grace which brings up ſouls to thoſe terms of reconciliation. And ſurely he hath not ſuſpended the mercy of our reconciliation upon unreaſonable or impoſſible conditions. He hath not ſaid, if you will do as much for me, *as you have done againſt me*, I will be at peace with you: but the two grand articles of peace with God, are *repentance* and *faith*. In the firſt, we lay down arms againſt God, and it is meet it ſhould be ſo, before he re-admits us into a ſtate of peace and favour; in the

Digitized by Google

other, we accept Chriſt and pardon through him with a thankful heart, yielding up ourſelves to his government, which is equally reaſonable.

Theſe are the terms on which we are actually reconciled to God. "Let the wicked forſake his way, and the unrighteous man his "thoughts; and let him turn to the Lord, and he will have "mercy on him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." So Rom. v. 1. "Being juſtified by faith, we have peace with "God." And ſurely it would not become the holy God to own, as his friend and favourite, a man that goes on perverſely and impenitently in the way of ſin; not ſo much as acknowledging, or once bewailing the wrong he hath done him, purpoſing to do ſo no more; or to receive into amity one that ſlights and rejects the Lord Jeſus, whoſe precious blood was ſhed to procure and purchaſe peace and pardon for ſinners.

But if there be any poor ſoul, that ſaith in his heart, it repents me for ſinning againſt God, and is ſincerely willing to come to Chriſt, upon goſpel-terms, he ſhall have peace. And that peace,

Fourthly, Is no common peace. The reconciliation which the Lord Jeſus died to procure for broken-hearted believers, it is,

Firſt, A firm well-bottomed reconciliation, putting the reconciled ſoul beyond all poſſibility of coming under God's wrath any more, Iſa. liv. 10. "Mountains may depart, and hills be re-"moved, but the covenant of this peace cannot be removed." Chriſt is a ſurety, by way of *caution*, to prevent the new breaches, 2 John i. 2.

Secondly, This reconciliation with God is the fountain out of which all our other comforts flow to us; this is plainly included in thoſe words of Eliphaz to Job, chap. xxii. 21. "Acquaint now "thyſelf with him, and be at peace, thereby good ſhall come "upon thee." As trade flouriſhes, and riches come in when peace is made betwixt ſtates and kingdoms; ſo all ſpiritual and temporal mercies flow into our boſoms, when once we are reconciled to God. What the comfort of ſuch a peace will be in a day of ſtraits and dangers, and what it will be valued at in a dying day, who but he that feels it can declare? And yet ſuch an one cannot fully declare it, for it paſſes all underſtanding, Phil. iv. 7. We ſhall now make ſome improvement of this, and paſs on to the third end of the death of Chriſt.

Inference 1. *If Chriſt died to reconcile God and man, how horrid an evil then is ſin! And how terrible was that breach made betwixt God and the creature by it, which could no other way be made up but by the death of the Son of God!* I remember I have read, that when a great chaſm or breach was made in the earth by an earthquake, and the oracle was conſulted how it might be cloſed; this anſwer

Digitized by Google

was returned, *That breach can never be closed, except something of great worth be thrown into it.* Such a breach was that which sin made, it could never be reconciled but by the death of Jesus Christ, the most excellent thing in all the creation.

Inf. 2. *How sad is the state of all such as are not comprised in the articles of peace with God!* The impenitent unbeliever is excepted. God is not reconciled to him: and if God be his enemy, how little avails it, who is his friend? For, if God be a man's enemy, he hath an Almighty enemy in him, whose very frown is destruction, Deut. xxxii. 40, 41, 42. "I lift up my hand to heaven and say, "I live for ever. If I whet my glittering sword, and my hand "take hold on judgment, I will render vengeance to my enemies, "and I will reward them that hate me. I will make mine arrows "drunk with blood, (and my sword shall devour flesh) and that "with the blood of the slain and the captives, from the beginning "of revenges upon the enemy."

Yea, he is an *unavoidable* enemy. Fly to the utmost parts of the earth, there shall his hand reach thee, as it is Psal. cxxxix. 10. The wings of the morning cannot carry thee out of his reach. If God be your enemy, you have an immortal enemy, who lives for ever to avenge himself upon his adversaries. And what wilt thou do when thou art in Saul's case? 1 Sam. xxviii. 15, 16. Alas, whither wilt thou turn? To whom wilt thou complain? But what wilt thou do, when thou shalt stand at the bar, and see that God, who is thine enemy, upon the throne? Sad is their case indeed, who are not comprehended in the articles of peace with God.

Inf. 3. If Christ died to reconcile us to God, *give diligence to clear up to your own souls, your interest in this reconciliation.* If Christ thought it worth his blood to purchase it, it is worth your care and pains to clear it. And what can better evidence it, than your conscientious tenderness of sin, lest you make new breaches. Ah, if reconciled, you will say, as Ezra ix. 14. "And now our God, "seeing thou hast given us such a deliverance as this; should we "again break thy commandments?" If reconciled to God, his friends will be your friends, and his enemies your enemies. If God be your friend, you will be diligent to please him, John xv. 10, 14. He that makes not peace with God is an enemy to his own soul. And he that is at peace, but takes no pains to clear it, is an enemy to his own comfort. But I must pass from this to the third end of Christ's death.

End 3. You have seen two of those beautiful births of Christ's travail, and lo, a third cometh, namely, *The sanctification of his people.* Typical blood was shed, as you heard, to purify them that were unclean; and so was the blood of Christ shed to purge away

Digitized by Google

the sins of his people; so speaks the apostle expressly, Eph. v. 25, 26. "Christ gave himself for the church, that he might sanctify "and cleanse it." And so he tells us himself, John xvii. 19. "And for their sakes I sanctify myself," i. e. consecrate or devote myself to death, "That they also might be sanctified through the "truth." Upon the account of this benefit received by the blood of Christ, is that *Doxology*, which, in a lower strain, is now sounded in the churches, but will be matter of the Lamb's song in heaven, Rev. i. 5, 6. "To him that loved us, and washed us from "our sins, in his own blood,—be glory and honour for ever." Now, there is a two-fold evil in sin, the *guilt* of it, and the *pollution* of it. Justification properly cures the former, sanctification the latter; but both justification and sanctification flow unto sinners out of the death of Christ. And though it is proper to say the Spirit sanctifies, yet, it is certain, it was the blood of Christ that procured for us the Spirit of sanctification. Had not Christ died, the Spirit had never come down from heaven upon any such design.

The pouring forth of Christ's blood for us, obtained the pouring forth of the spirit of holiness upon us. Therefore the Spirit is said to *come in his name, and to take of his, and shew it unto us.* Hence it is said, 1 John v. 6. "He came both by blood and by "water;" by blood, washing away the guilt; by water, purifying from the filth of sin. Now this fruit of Christ's death, even our sanctification, is a most incomparable mercy. For, do but consider a few particular excellencies of holiness.

First, Holiness is the image and glory of God. His image, Col. iii. 10. and his glory, Exod. xv. 11. "Who is like unto thee, O "Lord, glorious in holiness." Now, when the guilt and filth of sin are washed off, and the beauty of God put upon the soul in sanctification, O what a beautiful creature is the soul now! So lovely in the eyes of Christ, even in its imperfect holiness, that he saith, Cant. vi. 5. "Turn away thine eyes from me, for they "have overcome me." So we render it, but the Hebrew * word signifies, "they have made me proud, or puffed me up." It is a beam of divine glory upon the creature, enamouring the very heart of Christ.

Secondly, As it is the soul's highest beauty, so it is the soul's best evidence for heaven. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they "shall see God," Matt. v. 8. "And without holiness no man "shall see God, Heb. xii. 14. No gifts, no duties, no natural endowments will evidence a right in heaven, but the least measure of true holiness will secure heaven to the soul.

* דורזיבני

Thirdly, As holineſs is the ſoul's beſt evidence for heaven, ſo it is a continual ſpring of comfort to it in the way thither. The pureſt and ſweeteſt pleaſures in this world are the reſults of holineſs. 'Till we come to live holy, we never live comfortably. Heaven is epitomized in holineſs.

Fourthly, And to ſay no more; it is the peculiar mark by which God hath viſibly diſtinguiſhed his own from other men, Pſal. iv. 3. "The Lord hath ſet apart him that is godly for himſelf," *q. d.* this is the man, and that the woman, to whom I intend to do good for ever. This is a man for me. O holineſs, how ſurpaſſingly glorious art thou!

Inference 1. Did Chriſt die to ſanctify his people, how deep then is the pollution of ſin, that nothing but the blood of Chriſt can cleanſe it! All the tears of a penitent ſinner, ſhould he ſhed as many as there have fallen drops of rain ſince the creation to this day, cannot waſh away one ſin. The everlaſting burnings in hell cannot purify the flaming conſcience from the leaſt ſin. O gueſs at the wound by the largeneſs and length of this tent that follows the mortal weapon, Sin.

Inf. 2. Did Chriſt die to ſanctify his people? Behold then the love of a Saviour. "He loved us, and waſhed us from our ſins "in his own blood." He did not ſhed the blood of beaſts, as the prieſts of old did, but his own blood, Heb. ix. 12. And that not common, but precious blood, 1 Pet. i. 1, 19. The blood of God; one drop of which out-values the blood that runs in the veins of all Adam's poſterity. And not ſome of that blood, but all; to the laſt drop. He bled every vein dry for us; and what remained lodged about the heart of a dead Jeſus, was let out by that bloody ſpear which pierced the *Pericardium:* ſo that he beſtowed the whole treaſure of his blood upon us. And thus liberal was he of his blood to us when we were enemies. This then is that heavenly Pelican that feeds his young with his own blood. O what manner of love is this! But I muſt haſten.

End 4. *As Chriſt died to ſanctify his people; ſo he died alſo to confirm the New Teſtament to all thoſe ſanctified ones.* So it was in the type, Exod. xxiv. 8. and ſo it is in the text. "This is the New Teſta-"ment in my blood," Matt. xxvi. 28. i. e. ratified and confirmed by my blood. For, where a teſtament is, there muſt alſo of neceſſity be the death of the teſtator, Heb. ix. 16. So that now all the bleſſings and benefits bequeathed to believers in the laſt will and teſtament of Chriſt, are abundantly confirmed and ſecured to them by his death. Yea, he died on purpoſe to make that teſtament of force to them. Men make their wills and teſtaments, and Chriſt makes his. What they bequeath, and give in their wills, is a free and voluntary act, they cannot be compelled to do it.

Digitized by Google

And what is bequeathed to us in this teſtament of Chriſt, is altogether a free and voluntary donation*. Other teſtators uſe to bequeath their eſtates to their wives and children, and near relations; ſo doth this teſtator; all is ſettled upon his ſpouſe, the church, upon believers, his children. A ſtranger intermeddles not with theſe mercies. They give all their goods and eſtates, that can that way be conveyed, to their friends that ſurvive them. Chriſt giveth to his church, in the New Teſtament, three ſorts of goods.

Firſt, All temporal good things, 1 Tim. vi. 1. Matt. vi. 33. i. e. the comfort and bleſſing of all, though not the poſſeſſion of much. "As having nothing, and yet poſſeſſing all things," 2 Cor. vi. 10.

Secondly, All ſpiritual good things are bequeathed to them in this teſtament, as remiſſion of ſin, and acceptation with God, which are contained in their juſtification, Rom. iii. 24, 25, 26. Sanctification of their natures, both initial and progreſſive, 1 Cor. i. 30. Adoption into the family of God, Gal. iii. 26. The miniſtry of angels, Heb. i. 14. Intereſt in all the promiſes, 2 Pet. i. 4. Thus all ſpiritual good things are in Chriſt's teſtament conveyed to them. And as all temporal and ſpiritual, ſo,

Thirdly, All eternal good things. Heaven, glory, and eternal life, Rom. viii. 10, 11. No ſuch bequeſts as theſe were ever found in the teſtaments of princes. That which kings and nobles ſettle by will upon their heirs, are but trifles to what Chriſt hath conferred in the New Teſtament upon his people. And all this is confirmed and ratified by the death of Chriſt, ſo that the promiſe is ſure, and the eſtate indefeaſible to all the heirs of promiſe.

How the death of Chriſt confirmed the New Teſtament is worth our enquiry. The Socinians, as they allow no other end of Chriſt's death, but the confirmation of the New Teſtament, ſo they affirm he did it only by way of teſtimony, or witneſs-bearing in his death. But this is a vile derogation from the efficacy of Chriſt's blood, to bring it down into an equality with the blood of martyrs. As if there were no more in it than was in their blood.

But know, Reader, Chriſt died not only, or principally, to confirm the teſtament by his blood, as witneſs to the truth of thoſe things, but his death ratified it as the death of a teſtator, which makes the New Teſtament irrevocable. And ſo Chriſt is called in this text. Look as when a man hath made his will, and is dead,

* *Nullo præſentis metu periculi*, i. e. Without any fear of preſent danger. *Cokes's Inſtit. l. 3. cap. 10.*

Digitized by Google

that will is presently in force, and can never be recalled. Besides, the will of the dead is sacred with men. They dare not cross it. It is certain the last will and testament of Christ is most sacred, and God will never annul or make it void. Moreover, it is not with Christ as with other testators, who die, and must trust the performance of their wills with their executors, but as he died to put it in force, so he lives again to be the executor of his own testament. And all power to fulfil his will is now in his own hands, Rev. i. 18.

Inference 1. Did Christ die to confirm the New Testament, in which such legacies are bequeathed to believers. How are all believers concerned then to prove the will of a dead Jesus! My meaning is, to clear their title to the mercies contained in this blessed testament. And this may be done two ways. By clearing to ourselves our covenant-relations to Christ. And by discovering those special covenant-impressions upon our hearts, to which the promises therein contained, do belong.

The probate of Christ's last will and testament.

First, Examine your relations to Christ. Are you his *spouse?* Have you forsaken all for him? Psal. xlv. 10. Are you ready to take your lot with him, as it falls in prosperity or adversity? Jer. ii. 2. And are you loyal to Christ! "Thou shalt be for me, and "not for another," Hos. iii. 3. Do you yield obedience to him as your Head and Husband? Eph. vi. 24. then you may be confident you are interested in the benefits and blessings of Christ's last will and testament; for can you imagine Christ will make a testament and forget his spouse? It cannot be. If he so loved the church as to give himself for her, much more what he hath is settled on her. Again, are you his spiritual seed, his children by regeneration? Are you born of the Spirit? John iii. Do you resemble Christ in holiness? 1 Pet. i. 14, 15. Do you find a reverential fear of Christ carrying you to obey him in all things? Mal. i. 6. Are you led by the Spirit of Christ? "As many as are so led, "they are the sons of God," Rom. viii. 14. To conclude, Have you the *spirit of adoption*, enabling you to cry, *Abba, Father?* Gal. iv. 6. that is, helping you in a gracious manner, with reverence mixed with filial confidence, to open your hearts spiritually to your Father on all occasions? If so, you are children; and if children, doubt not but you have a rich legacy in Christ's last will and testament. He would not seal up his testament, and forget his dear children.

Secondly, You may discern your interest in the new testament or covenant (for they are substantially the same thing) by the new covenant-impressions that are made on your hearts, which are so many clear evidences of your right to the benefits it contains.

Digitized by Google

Such are ſpiritual illuminations, Jer. xxxi. 34. gracious ſoftneſs and tenderneſs of heart, Ezek. xi. 19. the awful dread and fear of God, Jer. xxxii. 43. the copy or tranſcript of his laws on your hearts in gracious correſpondent principles, Jer. xxxi. 33. Theſe things ſpeak you the children of the covenant, the perſons on whom all theſe great things are ſettled.

Inf. 2. To conclude, It is the indiſpenſible duty of all on whom Chriſt hath ſettled ſuch mercies, *to admire his love*, and *walk anſwerably* to it.

Firſt, Admire the love of Chriſt. O how intenſe and ardent was the love of Jeſus! who deſigned for you ſuch an inheritance, with ſuch a ſettlement of it upon you! Theſe are the mercies with which his love had travailed big from eternity, and now he ſees the travail of his ſoul, and you alſo have ſeen ſomewhat of it this day. Before this love let all the ſaints fall down aſtoniſhed, humbly profeſſing that they owe themſelves, and all they are, or ſhall be worth, to eternity, to this love.

Secondly, And be ſure you walk becoming perſons for whom Chriſt hath done ſuch great things. Comfort yourſelves under preſent abaſures with your ſpiritual privileges, James ii. 5. and let all your rejoicing be in Chriſt, and what you have in him, whilſt others are bleſſing themſelves in vanity. Thus we have finiſhed the ſtate of Chriſt's humiliation, and thence proceed to the ſecond ſtate of his exaltation.

An Introduction to the State of Exaltation.

Having finiſhed what I deſigned to ſpeak to, about the work of redemption, ſo far as it was carried on by Chriſt in his humble ſtate, we ſhall now view that bleſſed work as it is further *advanced*, and *perfected* in *his ſtate of exaltation*.

The whole of that work was not to be finiſhed on earth in a ſtate of ſuffering and abaſure, therefore the apoſtle makes his *exaltation*, in order to the finiſhing of the remainder of his work, ſo neceſſary a part of his prieſthood, that without it he could not have been a prieſt, Heb. viii. 4. "If he were on earth he ſhould "not be a prieſt," i. e. if he ſhould have continued always here, and had not been raiſed again from the dead, and taken up into glory, *he could not have been a complete and perfect prieſt*.

For look, as it was not enough for the ſacrifice to be ſlain without, and his blood left there; but after it was ſhed without, it muſt be carried within the vail, into the moſt holy place before the Lord, Heb. ix. 7. ſo it was not ſufficient that Chriſt ſhed his own blood on earth, except he carry it before the Lord into heaven, and there perform his *interceſſion-work* for us.

Moreover, God the Father ſtood engaged in a ſolemn covenant,

Digitized by Google

to reward him for his deep humiliation, with a moſt glorious and illuſtrious advancement, Iſa. xlix. 5, 6, 7. And how God (as it became him) made this good to Chriſt, the apoſtle very clearly expreſſes, Phil. ii. 9.

Yea, juſtice required it ſhould be ſo. For how could our ſurety be detained in the priſon of the grave, when the debt for which he was impriſoned was by him fully diſcharged, ſo that the law of God muſt acknowledge itſelf to be fully ſatisfied in all its claims and demands? His reſurrection from the dead was, therefore, but his diſcharge or acquittance upon full payment. Which could not in juſtice be denied him.

And, indeed, God the Father loſt nothing by it, for there never was a more glorious manifeſtation made of the name of God to the world, than was made in that work. Therefore it is ſaid, Phil. ii. 11. ſpeaking of one of the deſigns of Chriſt's exaltation, it was, (ſaith the apoſtle), "That every tongue ſhould confeſs that "Jeſus Chriſt is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." O how is the love of God to poor ſinners illuſtriouſly, yea, aſtoniſhingly, diſplayed in Chriſt's exaltation. When, to ſhew the complacency and delight, which he took in our recovery, he hath openly declared to the world, that his exalting Chriſt to all that glory, ſuch as no mere creature ever was, or can be exalted to, was beſtowed upon him as a reward for that work, that moſt grateful work of our redemption, Phil. ii. 9, Wherefore God alſo hath *highly exalted him;* there is an "* emphatical pleonaſm in that word," our Engliſh is too flat to deliver out the elegancy of the original, it is *ſuper-exaltation.* The Syriac renders it, "he hath multiplied his "ſublimity." The Arabic, "he hath heightened him with an "height." Juſtin, "he hath famouſly exalted him." Higher he cannot raiſe him, a greater argument of his high ſatisfaction and content in the recovery of poor ſinners cannot be given. For this, therefore, God the Father ſhall have glory and honour aſcribed to him in heaven to all eternity.

Now this ſingular exaltation of Jeſus Chriſt, as it properly reſpects his human nature, which alone is capable of advancement; for, in reſpect of his divine nature, he never ceaſed to be the Moſt High. So it was done to him as a common perſon, and as the Head of all believers, their Repreſentative in this as well as in his other works. God therein ſhewing what, in due time, he intends to do with the perſons of his elect, after they, in conformity to Chriſt, have ſuffered a while. Whatever God the Father intend-

* Υπερυψωσε, *Pleonaſmus emphaticus*, Hieron. *Multiplicavit ſublimitatem ejus*, Arab. *Sublimitate ſublimavit eum*, Syr. *Inſignitur extulit*, Juſtin. M. *Secundum quandam naturam dicitur exaltatus, ſecundum quam humiliatus fuit.* Zanch.

Digitized by Google

eth to do in us, or for us, he hath first done it to the person of our *Representative, Jesus Christ.* And this, if you observe, the scriptures carry in very clear and plain expressions, through all the degrees and steps of Christ's exaltation, viz. his *resurrection, ascension, session* at the right-hand of God, and returning to judge the world; of which I purpose to speak distinctly in the following sermons.

He arose from the dead as a public person, Col. iii. 1. "If ye "then be risen with Christ," saith the apostle; so that the saints have communion and fellowship with him in his resurrection.

He ascended into heaven, as a public person, for so it is said in Eph. ii. 6. "He hath raised us up," or exalted us together with Christ. He sits at God's right-hand, as a common person, for so it follows in the next clause, "and hath made us sit together in "heavenly places in Christ Jesus." We sit there in our Representative. And when he shall come again to judge the world, the saints shall come with him. So it is prophesied, Zech. xiv. 5, "The Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee." And as they come with Christ from heaven, so they shall sit on thrones with him, judging by way of suffrage. They shall be assessors with the Judge, 1 Cor. vi. 2. This deserves a special remark, that all this honour is given to Christ, as our Head and Representative, for thence results abundance of comfort to the people of God. Carry it therefore along with you in your thoughts, throughout the whole of Christ's advancement. Think when you shall hear that Christ is risen from the dead, and is in all that glory and authority in heaven, how sure the salvation of his redeemed is. "For if "when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God, by the death "of his Son; much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by "his life." Surely, it cannot be supposed, but "he is able to "save to the uttermost, all them that come to God by him; seeing "he ever lives to make intercession," Heb. vii. 25. Think how safe the people of God in this world are, whose Head is in heaven. It was a comfortable expression of one of the fathers, encouraging himself and others with this truth in a dark day; "Come, (said he) "why do we tremble thus, Do we not see our head above "water*?" If he live, believers cannot die, John xiv. 19. "Because I live, ye shall live also."

And let no man's heart suggest a suspicious thought to him, that this wonderful advancement of Christ may cause him to forget his poor people, groaning here below under sin and misery. For the temper and disposition of his faithful and tender heart, is not changed with his condition. He bears the same respect to us as

* *Nonne videmus caput nostrum super aquas.* Greg.

Digitized by Google

when he dwelt among us. For indeed he there lives and acts upon our account, Heb. vii. 25. 1 John ii. 1, 2.

And how seasonable and comfortable will the meditations of Christ's exaltation be to thee, O believer, when sickness hath wasted thy body, withered its beauty, and God is bringing thee to the dust of death! Ah! think then, that that "vile body shall "be conformed to the glorious body of Christ," Phil. iii. 21. As God hath glorified, and highly exalted his Son, "whose form "was marred more than any man's;" so will he exalt thee also. I do not say, to a parity, or equality, in glory with Christ, for, in heaven he will be discerned and distinguished, by his peculiar glory, from all the angels and saints; as the sun is known by its excellent glory from the lesser stars. But we shall be conformed to this glorious Head, according to the proportion of members. O whither will love mount the believer in that day!

Having spoken thus much of Christ's exalted state, to cast some general light upon it, and engage your attentions to it, I shall now, according to the degrees of this his wonderful exaltation, briefly open it, under the fore-mentioned heads, viz. his resurrection, ascension, session at the Father's right-hand, and his return to judge the world.

SERMON XXXIX.

Wherein the Resurrection of CHRIST, with its Influences upon the Saints Resurrection, is clearly opened, and comfortably applied, being the first Step of his Exaltation.

MATTH. xxviii. 6.

He is not here; for he is risen, as he said: come, see the place where the Lord lay.

WE have finished the doctrine of Christ's humiliation, wherein the Sun of righteousness appeared to you, as a setting sun, gone out of sight; but as the sun when it is gone down to us, begins a new day in another part of the world, so Christ, having finished his course and work in this world, rises again, and that, in order to the acting another glorious part of his work in the world above. In his death, he was upon the matter totally eclipsed; but in his resurrection, he begins to recover his light and glory again. God never intended that the darling of his soul should be lost in an obscure sepulchre. An angel descends from heaven, to roll

Digitized by Google

away the ſtone, and, with it, the reproach of his death; and to be the heavenly herald, to proclaim his reſurrection to the two Marys, whoſe love to Chriſt had, at this time, drawn them to viſit the ſepulchre, where they lately left him.

At this time (the Lord being newly riſen) the keepers were trembling, and become as dead men. So great was the terrible majeſty and awful ſolemnity attending Chriſt's reſurrection; but, to encourage theſe good ſouls, the angel prevents them with theſe good tidings; "He is not here; for he is riſen, as he ſaid: come, "ſee the place where the Lord lay:" *q. d.* Be not troubled, though you have not the end you came for, *one ſight more of your dear, though dead Jeſus;* yet you have not loſt your labour; for, to your eternal comfort, I tell you, "he is riſen, as he ſaid." And to put it out of doubt, come hither and ſatisfy yourſelves, "See "the place where the Lord lay."

In which words we have both a declaration and confirmation of the reſurrection of Chriſt from the dead.

Firſt, A declaration of it by the angel, both negatively and affirmatively. Negatively, *He is not here.* Here indeed you laid him, here you left him, and here you thought to find him as you left him; but you are happily miſtaken, *He is not here.* However, this giving them no ſatisfaction, ſo he might continue dead ſtill, though removed to another place, as indeed they ſuſpected he was, John xx. 13. therefore his reſurrection is declared poſitively and affirmatively; *He is riſen;* ηγερθη, the * word imports, the active power or ſelf-quickening principle, by which Chriſt raiſed himſelf from the ſtate of the dead. Which Luke takes notice of alſo, Acts i. 3. where he ſaith, *He ſhewed*, or preſented, *himſelf alive after his paſſion.* It was the divine nature, or Godhead of Chriſt, which revived and raiſed the manhood.

Secondly, Here is alſo a plain confirmation of Chriſt's reſurrection, and that, *firſt*, From Chriſt's own prediction, *He is riſen, as he ſaid.* He foretold that which I declare to be now fulfilled. Let it not therefore ſeem incredible to you. *Secondly*, by their own ſight, "Come, ſee the place where the Lord lay." The grave hath loſt its gueſt; it is now empty; death hath loſt its prey. It received, but could not retain him, "Come, ſee the place where "the Lord lay." Thus the reſurrection of Chriſt is declared, and confirmed. Hence our obſervation is,

* The argument whereby we prove that Chriſt raiſed himſelf by his own power, is drawn from the very activity of his reſurrection: *Chriſtus* ηγερθη, i. e. *Chriſt aroſe*, Matt. xxviii. 6. ανεστησεν εαυτον ζωντα, Acts i. 3. *Maccov. loc. Com. p.* 874.

Digitized by Google

Doct. *That our Lord Jesus Christ, by the almighty power of his own Godhead, revived, and rose from the dead; to the terror and confternation of his enemies, and the unspeakable consolation of believers.*

That our Lord Jesus Christ, though laid, was not lost in the grave; but the third day revived and rose again, is a truth confirmed to us by many infallible proofs, as Luke witnesseth, Acts i. 3. We have testimonies of it, both from heaven and earth, and both infallible. From heaven, we have the testimony of angels, and to the testimony of an angel all credit is due; for angels are holy creatures, and cannot deceive us. The angel tells the two Marys, in the text, "He is risen." We have testimonies of it from men, holy men, who were eye-witnesses of this truth, to whom he shewed himself alive by the space of forty days after his resurrection, by no less than * nine solemn apparitions to them. Sometimes five hundred brethren saw him at once, 1 Cor. xv. 6. These were holy persons, who durst not deceive, and who confirmed their testimony with their blood. So that no point of religion is of more confessed truth, and infallible certainty than this before us.

And blessed be God it is so. For if it were not, then were the "gospel in vain," 1 Cor. xv. 14. seeing it hangs the whole weight of our faith, hope, and salvation, upon Christ as risen from the dead†. If this were not so, then would the holy, and divinely inspired apostles be found *false-witnesses*, 1 Cor. xv. 15. For they all, with one mouth, constantly, and to the death affirmed it. If Christ be not risen, "then are believers yet in their sins," 1 Cor. xv. 17. For our justification is truly ascribed to the resurrection of Christ, Rom. iv. 25. Whilst Christ was dying, and continued in the state of the dead, the price of our redemption was all that while but in paying, the payment was completed, when he revived and rose again. Therefore for Christ to have continued always in the state of the dead, had been never to have completely satisfied; hence the whole force and weight of our justification depends upon his resurrection. Nay, had not Christ risen, "the dead had "perished," 1 Cor. xv. 17. Even the dead who died in the faith of Christ, and of whose salvation there now remains no ground to doubt. Moreover,

* John xx. 14. Mark xvi. 12. John xx. 19. 1 Cor. xv. 6, 7. 1 Cor. xv. 8. John vii. 26. John xxi. 1, 2. Luke xxiv. 36.

† Our deliverance, was in his death, put in motion; or, as they say, *in fieri*, i. e. begin; but was finished in his resurrection, whence it is, that our justification or absolution from debt is justly by the apostle ascribed not to his death but resurrection, &c. *Maccov. loc. Com. p.* 869.

Digitized by Google

Had he not revived, and risen from the dead, how could all the *types* that prefigured it have been satisfied? Surely they must have stood as insignificant things in the scriptures; and so must all the predictions of his resurrection, by which it was so plainly foretold. See Matth. xii. 40. Luke xxiv. 46. Psal. xvi. 10. 1 Cor. xv. 4.

To conclude. Had he not risen from the dead, how could he have been installed in that glory whereof he is now possessed in heaven, and which was promised him before the world was, upon the account of his death and sufferings? "For to this end Christ "both died, and rose and revived, that he might be Lord both of "the dead and living," Rom. xiv. 9. And that, in this state of dominion and glorious advancement, he might powerfully apply the virtues and benefits of his blood to us, which else had been as a precious cordial spilt upon the ground.

So then, there remains no doubt at all of the certainty of Christ's resurrection; it was so, and upon all accounts it must needs be so; for you see how great a weight the scriptures hang upon this nail. And blessed be God it is a nail fastened in a sure place. I need spend no more words to confirm it; but rather choose to explain and open the nature and manner of his resurrection, which I shall do by shewing you four or five properties of it. And the first is this,

First, Christ rose from the dead with awful majesty. So you find it in Mat. xxviii. 2, 3, 4. "And behold, there was a great "earthquake; for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, "and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat up- "on it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment "white as snow. And for fear of him the keepers did shake, "and became as dead men." Human infirmity was not able to bear such heavenly majesty as attended the business of that morning. Nature sank under it. This earthquake was, as one calls it, *triumphale signum*: a sign of triumph, or token of victory, given by Christ, not only to the keepers, and the neighbouring city, but to the whole world, that he had overcome death in its own dominions, and, like a conqueror, lifted up his head above all his enemies. So when the Lord fought from heaven for his people, and gave them a glorious, though but temporal deliverance; see how the prophetess drives on the triumph in that rhetorical song, Judg. v. 4, 5. Alluding to the most awful appearance of God, at the giving of the law. "Lord, when thou wentest out of Seir, when "thou marchedst out of the field of Edom, the earth trembled, "and the heavens dropped, the clouds also dropped water. The "mountains melted from before the Lord, even that Sinai from

Digitized by Google

" before the Lord God of Iſrael." Our Lord Jeſus went out of the grave, in like manner, and marched out of that bloody field, with a pomp and majeſty * becoming ſo great a conqueror.

Secondly, And to increaſe the ſplendor of that day, and drive on the triumph, his reſurrection was attended with the reſurrection of many of the ſaints; who had ſlept in their graves till then, and then were awakened and raiſed to attend the Lord at his riſing. So you read, Mat. xxvii. 52, 53. " And the graves were opened, " and many bodies of the ſaints, which ſlept, aroſe, and came out " of the graves, after his reſurrection; and went into the ho- " ly city, and appeared unto many." This wonder was deſigned, both to adorn the reſurrection of Chriſt, and to give a ſpecimen or pledge of our reſurrection; which alſo is to be in the virtue of his. This indeed was the reſurrection of ſaints, and none but ſaints, the reſurrection of many ſaints, yet it was but a ſpecial reſurrection, intended only to ſhew what God will one day do for all his ſaints: And, for the preſent, to give teſtimony of Chriſt's reſurrection from the dead. They were ſeen, and known of many in the city, who doubtleſs never thought to have ſeen them any more in this world. To enquire curiouſly, as ſome do, who they were, what diſcourſe they had with thoſe to whom they appeared, and what became of them afterwards, is a vain thing. God hath caſt a veil of ſilence and ſecrecy upon theſe things, that we might content ourſelves with the written word, and he that " will not " believe Moſes and the prophets, neither will he believe though " one riſe from the dead," as theſe ſaints did.

Thirdly, As Chriſt roſe from the dead with thoſe *ſatellites* or attendants, who accompanied him at his reſurrection; ſo it was by the power of his own Godhead that he quickened and raiſed himſelf; and by the virtue of his reſurrection were they raiſed alſo, who accompanied him. It was not the *Angel* who rolled back the ſtone that revived him in the ſepulchre, but he reſumed his own life; ſo he tells us, John x. 18. " I lay down my life that I may " take it again." Hence 1 Pet. iii. 18. He is ſaid to be put to death in the fleſh, but quickened by the Spirit, i. e. by the power of his Godhead, or divine nature, which is oppoſed there to fleſh, or his human nature. By the eternal Spirit he offered himſelf up to God, when he died, Heb. ix. 14. i. e. by his own Godhead, not the third perſon in the Trinity, for then it could not have been aſcribed to him as his own act, that he offered up himſelf. And by the ſame Spirit he was quickened again.

And, therefore, the apoſtle well obſerves, Rom. i. 4. " That

* *Eſt incedere cum pompa et majeſtate, i. e.* It is to march with pomp and majeſty.

Digitized by Google

" he was declared to be the Son of God with power, by his re-" surrection from the dead." Now if he had been raised by the power of the Father, or Spirit only, and not by his own, how could he be declared by his resurrection to be the Son of God? What more had appeared in him than in others? For others are raised by the power of God, if that were all. So that in this respect also it was a marvellous resurrection. Never any did, or shall rise as Christ rose, by a self-quickening principle. For tho' many dead saints rose at that time also, yet it was by the virtue of Christ's resurrection that their graves were opened, and their bodies quickened. In which respect, he saith, John xi. 25. when he raised dead Lazarus, " I am the resurrection and the life," i. e. the principle of life and quickening, by which the dead saints are raised.

Fourthly, And therefore it may be truly affirmed, that though some dead saints are raised to life before the resurrection of Christ, yet that Christ is " the first-born from the dead," as he is called, Col. i. 18. For though Lazarus and others were raised, yet not by themselves, but by Christ. It was by his virtue and power, not their own. And though they were raised to life, yet they died again. Death recovered them again, but Christ dieth no more. " Death hath no dominion over him." He was the first that opened the womb of the earth, the first-born from the dead, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence.

Fifthly, But lastly, Christ rose as a public or common person. " As the first fruits of them that slept," 1 Cor. xv. 20. I desire this may be well understood; for upon this account it is that our resurrection is secured to us by the resurrection of Christ; and not a resurrection only, but a blessed and happy one, for the first-fruits both assured and sanctified the whole crop or harvest.

Now that Christ did rise, as a public person, representing and comprehending all the elect, who were called *the children of the resurrection*, is plain from Eph. ii. 6. Where we are said to be risen with, or in him. So that, as we are said to die in Adam, (who also was a common person) as the * branches die in the death of the root; so we are said to be raised from death in Christ, who is the head, root, and representative, of all his elect seed. And why is he called the *first-born*, and *first begotten from the dead*, but with respect to the whole number of the elect, that are to be born from the dead in their time and order also; and as sure as the whole harvest follows the first fruits, so shall the general resurrection of the saints to life eternal follow this birth of the first-born from the dead.

* Mankind putrified in their first parent, as the branches in the root. *Grey.*

Digitized by Google

It shall surely follow it, I say, and that not only as a *consequent* follows an *antecedent*, but as an *effect* follows its proper *cause*. Now there is a three-fold causality, or influence that Christ's resurrection hath upon the saints resurrection, of which it is at once the *meritorious*, *efficient*, and *exemplary* cause.

First, The resurrection of Christ is a *meritorious* cause of the saints resurrection, as it completed his satisfaction, and finished his payment, and so our justification is properly assigned to it, as before was noted from Rom. iv. 25. This his resurrection was the receiving of the acquittance, the cancelling of the bond. And had not this been done, we had still been in our sins, as he speaks, 1 Cor. xv. 7. and so our guilt had been still a bar to our happy resurrection. But now, the price being paid in his death, which payment was finished when he revived; and the discharge then received for us, now there is nothing lies in bar against our resurrection to eternal life.

Secondly, As it is the meritorious cause of our resurrection, so it is the *efficient cause* of it also. For when the time shall come that the saints shall rise out of the dust, they shall be raised by Christ, as their head, in whom the *effective principle* of their life is. "Your "life is hid with Christ in God," as it is Col. iii. 3. As when a man awakes out of his sleep*, "the animal spirits seated in the "brain, being set at liberty by the digestion of those vapours that "bound them up, do play freely through every part and member "of the body;" so Christ, the believer's mystical head, being quickened, the spirit of life, which is in him, shall be diffused through all his members to quicken them also in the morning of the resurrection. Hence the warm animating dew of Christ's resurrection is said to be to our bodies, as the dew of the morning is to the withered, languishing plants, which revive by it, Isa. xxvi. 19. "Thy "dew is as the dew of herbs;" and then it follows, "the earth "shall cast forth her dead." So that by the same faith we put Christ's resurrection into the *promises*, we may put the believer's resurrection into the *conclusion*. And therefore, the apostle makes them convertibles, reasoning forward, from Christ's to ours; and back again from ours to his, 1 Cor. xv. 12, 13. Which is also the sense of that scripture, Rom. viii 10, 11. "And if Christ be "in you, the body indeed is dead because of sin; but the spirit is "life because of righteousness." i. e. Though you are really united to Christ by the Spirit, yet your bodies must die as well as other

* *Proximum instrumentum sive sedes somni est cerebrum, utpote in quo spiritus animales frigescunt et condensantur, aut etiam resolvuntur et dissipantur, proxime, tanquam in propria spirituum animalium officina, et in quo etiam radices nervorum obstruuntur per vapores, ne spiritus animales sensui communi servire aut in partes reliquas inferiores corporis propagari libere possint.* Keckerm. Syst. Phys. p. *(mihi)* 441.

Digitized by Google

men's; but your ſouls ſhall be preſently, upon your diſſolution, ſwallowed up in life. And then it follows, verſe 11. "But if the "Spirit of him that raiſed up Jeſus from the dead, dwell in you; "he that raiſed up Chriſt from the dead, ſhall alſo quicken your "mortal bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in you," i. e. though your bodies muſt die, yet they ſhall live again in the reſurrection; and that by virtue of the Spirit of Chriſt which dwelleth in you, and is the bond of your myſtical union with him your head. You ſhall not be raiſed as others are, by a mere word of power, but by the Spirit of life dwelling in Chriſt your head, which is a choice prerogative indeed.

Thirdly, Chriſt's reſurrection is not only the meritorious and efficient cauſe, but it is alſo the *exemplary* cauſe or pattern of our reſurrection. "* He being the firſt and beſt, is therefore the "pattern and meaſure of all the reſt." So you read, Phil. iii. 21. "Who ſhall change our vile body that it may be faſhioned like "unto his glorious body." Now the *conformity* of our reſurrection to Chriſt's ſtands in the following particulars. Chriſt's body was raiſed ſubſtantially the ſame; ſo will ours. His body was raiſed firſt; ſo will ours be raiſed before the reſt of the dead. His body was wonderfully improved by the reſurrection; ſo will ours. His body was raiſed to be glorified; and ſo will ours.

Firſt, Chriſt's body was raiſed ſubſtantially the ſame that it was before; and ſo will ours. Not another, but the ſame body. Upon this very reaſon the apoſtle uſes that identical expreſſion, 1 Cor. xv. 53. "This corruptible muſt put on incorruption, and this "mortal, immortality." Pointing, as it were, to his own body when he ſpake it; the ſame body, I ſay, and that not only *ſpecifically* the ſame, (for indeed no other ſpecies of fleſh is ſo privileged) but the ſame *numerically*, that very body, not a new or another body in its ſtead. So that it ſhall be both the *what* it was, and the *who* it was. And indeed to deny this is to deny the reſurrection itſelf. For ſhould God prepare another body to be raiſed inſtead of this, it would not be a reſurrection, but a creation; for *non reſurrectio dici poterit, ubi non reſurgit quod cecidit.* That cannot be called a reſurrection, where one thing falls and another riſes, as Gregory long ſince pertinently obſerved.

Secondly, His body was raiſed, not by a word of power from the Father, but by his own Spirit. So will ours. Indeed the power of God ſhall go forth to unburrough ſinners, and fetch them forcibly out of their graves; but the reſurrection of the ſaints is to be effected another way; as I opened but now to you. Even by his Spirit which now dwelleth in them. That very Spirit of Chriſt

* *Optimum in unoquoque genere eſt regula et menſura caterorum.*

Digitized by Google

which effected their ſpiritual reſurrection from ſin, ſhall effect their corporal reſurrection alſo from the grave.

Thirdly, His body was raiſed firſt, he had in this, as well as in other things, the pre-eminence; ſo ſhall the ſaints, in reſpect of the wicked, have the pre-eminence in the reſurrection, 1 Theſ. iv. 16. "The dead in Chriſt ſhall riſe firſt." They are to attend the Lord at his coming, and will be brought forth ſooner than the reſt of the world, to attend on that ſervice. As the *ſheriff*, with his men, goes forth to meet the judge, before the gaoler brings forth his priſoners.

Fourthly, Chriſt's body was marvellouſly improved by the reſurrection, and ſo will ours. It fell in weakneſs, but was raiſed in power; no more capable of ſorrows, pains and diſhonours. In like manner our bodies are "ſown in weakneſs, but raiſed in "ſtrength, ſown in diſhonour, raiſed in glory. Sown natural "bodies, raiſed ſpiritual bodies," as the apoſtle ſpeaks, 1 Cor. xv. 43, 44. Spiritual bodies, not *properly*, but *analogically*. No diſtempers hang about glorified bodies, nor are they henceforth ſubject to any of thoſe natural neceſſities, to which they are now tied. There are no flaw, defects, or deformities, in the children of the reſurrection. What members are now defective or deformed, will then he reſtored to their perfect being and beauty; "for, "if the univerſal death of all parts be reſcinded by the reſurrec-"tion, how much more the partial death of any ſingle member?" As Tertullian * ſpeaks, and from thenceforth they are free from the law of mortality, "They can die no more," Luke xx. 35, 36. Thus ſhall they be improved by their reſurrection.

Fifthly, To conclude, Chriſt's body was raiſed from the dead to be glorified and crowned with honour. Oh it was a joyful day to him; and ſo will the reſurrection of the ſaints be to them, the day of the gladneſs of their hearts. It will be ſaid to them in that morning, "Awake, and ſing, ye that dwell in the duſt," as Iſa. xxvi. 19. O how comfortable will be the meeting betwixt the glorified ſoul, and its new raiſed body. Much more comfortable than that of Jacob's and Joſeph's, after twenty years abſence, Gen. xlvi. 29. Or that of David's with Jonathan, when he came out of the cave to him, 1 Sam. xx. 41. Or that of the father of the prodigal with his ſon, who "was dead, and is alive, was loſt, "and is found." As he ſpeaks, Luke xv. And there are three things will make it ſo.

Firſt, The gratifications of the ſoul, by the ſatisfaction of its natural appetite of union with its own body. For even glorified

* *Membri detruncatio vel obtuſio nonne mors membri eſt? Si univerſalis mors reſurrectione reſcinditur, quanto magis portionalis!* Tertull. de Reſur.

Digitized by Google

ſouls in heaven have ſuch an appetition and deſire of re-union. Indeed, the angels, who are pure ſpirits, as they never had union with, ſo they have no inclination to matter; but ſouls are otherwiſe tempered and diſpoſed. We are all ſenſible of its affection to the body now, in its compounded ſtate, we feel the tender care it hath for the body, the ſympathy with it, and lothneſs to be ſeparated from it. It is ſaid, 1 Cor. v. 6. "To be at home in the "body." And had not God implanted ſuch an inclination to this its tabernacle in it, it would not have paid that due reſpect it owes the body while it inhabited in it, nor have regarded what became of it when it left it. This inclination remains ſtill with it in heaven, it reckons not itſelf completely happy till its old dear companion and partner be with it, and in that ſenſe ſome underſtand thoſe words, Job xiv. 14. "All the days of my appointed time," i. e. of the time appointed for my body to remain in the grave, *will I wait till my change* (viz. that which will be made by the reſurrection) *come*; for it is manifeſt enough he ſpeaks there of the reſurrection. Now, when this its inclination to its own body, its longings and hankerings after it, are gratified with a ſight and enjoyment of it again, oh what a comfortable meeting will this make it! eſpecially if we conſider,

Secondly, The excellent temper and ſtate in which they ſhall meet each other. For, as the body ſhall be raiſed with all the improvements and endowments imaginable, which may render it amiable, and every way deſirable, ſo the ſoul comes down immediately from God out of heaven, ſhining in its holineſs and glory. It comes perfumed out of thoſe ivory palaces, with a ſtrong ſcent of heaven upon it. And thus it re-enters its body, and animates it again. But,

Thirdly, And principally, that wherein the chief joy of this meeting conſiſts, is the end for which the glorified ſoul comes down to quicken and repoſſeſs it, namely, *to meet the Lord*, and *ever to be with the Lord*. To receive a full reward for all the labours and ſervices it performed to God in this world. This muſt needs make that day, a day of triumph and exultation. It comes out of the grave, as Joſeph out of his priſon, to be advanced to the higheſt honour. O do but imagine what an extaſy of joy, and raviſhing pleaſure it will be, for a ſoul thus to reſume its own body, and ſay as it were, unto it, come away, my dear, my ancient friend, who ſerveđſt and ſufferedſt with me in the world; come along with me to meet the Lord, in whoſe preſence I have been ever ſince I parted with thee. Now thy bountiful Lord hath remembered thee alſo, and the day of thy glorification is come. Surely it will be a joyful awaking. For, do but imagine, what a joy it is for dear friends to meet after long ſeparation, how do they

Digitized by Google

uſe to give demonſtrations of their love and delight in each other, by embraces, kiſſes, tears, &c. Or frame but to yourſelves a notion of perfect health, when a ſprightly vivacity runs through every part, and the ſpirits do, as it were, dance before us, when we go about any buſineſs; eſpecially to ſuch a buſineſs as the buſineſs of that day will be, to receive a crown, and a kingdom. Do but imagine then what a ſun-ſhine morning this will be, and how the pains and agonies, cold ſweats, and bitter groans at parting will be recompenſed by the joy of ſuch a meeting?

And thus I have ſhewed you the certainty of Chriſt's reſurrection, the nature and properties of it, the threefold influence it hath on the ſaints reſurrection, and the conformity of ours unto his, in theſe five reſpects. His body roſe ſubſtantially the ſame, ſo ſhall ours; his body was raiſed by the Spirit, ſo ſhall ours. Not by the Godhead of Chriſt, as his was, but by the Spirit, who is the bond of our union with Chriſt. He was raiſed as the firſt-begotten from the dead, ſo the dead in Chriſt ſhall riſe firſt. His body was improved by the reſurrection, ſo ſhall ours. From the conſideration of all which,

Inference 1. *We infer, that if Chriſt was thus raiſed from the dead, then death is fairly overcome, and ſwallowed up in victory**: were it not ſo, it had never let Chriſt eſcape out of the grave. The prey of the terrible had never been thus reſcued out of its paws. *Death* is a dreadful enemy, it defies all the ſons and daughters of Adam. None durſt cope with this king of terrors but Chriſt, and he, by dying, went into the very den of this dragon, fought with it, and foiled it in the grave, its own territories and dominions, and came off a conqueror. For, as the apoſtle ſpeaks, Acts ii. 24. "It was "impoſſible it ſhould hold or detain him." Never did death meet with its over-match before it met with Chriſt, and he conquering it for us, and in our names, riſing as our repreſentative, now every ſingle ſaint triumphs over it as a vanquiſhed enemy, 1 Cor. xv. 55. "O death, where is thy ſting? O grave, where is thy vic-"tory? Thanks be to God, who hath given us the victory "through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt." Thus, like Joſhua, they ſet the foot of faith upon the neck of that king, and, with an holy ſcorn, deride its power. "O death, where is thy ſting?" If it be objected that it is ſaid, 1 Cor. xv. 26. "The laſt enemy that is to

* How far ſhort do we come of the primitive Chriſtians, whoſe faith in the reſurrection, and contempt of death, Cyprian thus expreſſes: With a ſound mind, firm faith, and undaunted courage, we are ready to ſubmit to the whole will of God, all fear of death being excluded; we think on the immortality which follows; and when the ſet time of God's ſending for us approaches, we come to him at his call willingly and without delay. *Cypr. ſect. 5. de Lapſ.* But when we come to die, we paſs into immortality by death; this is not a coming to our end, but a tranſlating of us. *Cypr. ubi ſupra.*

Digitized by Google

"be deſtroyed is death." And if ſo, then it ſhould ſeem the victory is not yet atchieved, and ſo we do but boaſt before the victory; it is at hand to reply, that the victory over death, obtained by Chriſt's reſurrection, is twofold, either *perſonal* and *incomplete*, or *general* and *complete*. He actually overcame it at his reſurrection, in his own perſon, perfectly and virtually for us, as our head; but at the general reſurrection of the ſaints (which his reſurrection, as the firſt-fruits, aſſures them of) then it will be utterly vanquiſhed and deſtroyed. Till then, it will exerciſe ſome little power over the bodies of the ſaints, in which reſpect it is called the *laſt enemy*. For ſin, the chief enemy that let it in, that was conquered utterly and eradicated when they died; but death holds their bodies in the grave till the coming of Chriſt, and then it is utterly to be vanquiſhed. For after that, they can die no more, 1 Cor. xv. 54. "And then ſhall be brought to paſs that ſaying "that is written, Death is ſwallowed up in victory*." *Then*, and not till then, will that conqueſt be fully completed in our perſons, though it be already ſo in Chriſt's; now incompletely in ours, and then completely and fully for ever. For the ſame word which ſignifies *victory* doth alſo ſignify *perpetuity*, and in this place a final or perpetual conqueſt. And, indeed, now it ſmites only with its dart, not with its ſting, and that but the believer's body only, and the body but for a time remains under it neither. So that there is no reaſon why a believer ſhould ſtand in a ſlaviſh fear of it.

Inf. 2. Has Chriſt, and hath his reſurrection ſuch a potent and comfortable influence into the reſurrection of the ſaints? *Then it is the duty, and will be the wiſdom of the people of God, ſo to govern, diſpoſe, and employ their bodies, as become men and women, that underſtand what glory is prepared for them at the reſurrection of the juſt.* Particularly,

Firſt, Be not fondly tender of them, but employ and uſe them for God here. How many good duties are loſt and ſpoiled by ſinful indulgence to our bodies? Alas! we are generally more ſolicitous to live long, than to live uſefully. How many ſaints have active, vigorous bodies, yet God hath little ſervice from them. If your bodies were animated by ſome other ſouls that love God more than you do, and burn with holy zeal to his ſervice, more work would be done for God by your bodies in a day, than is now done in a month. To have an able, healthy body, and not uſe it for God, for fear of hurting it, is as if one ſhould give you a ſtrong and ſtately horſe, upon condition you muſt not work or ride him.

* *Abſorpta eſt mors εις νικος in perpetuum, ex Hebræo* נצח *quod et victoriam ſignificat, et perpetuitatem.* Glaſſ. Rhet. ſac. p. 408.

Digitized by Google

Wherein is the mercy of having a body, except it be employed for God? Will not its reward at the reſurrection be ſufficient for all the pains you now put it to in his ſervice?

Secondly, See that you preſerve the due honour of your bodies. "Poſſeſs them in ſanctification and honour," 1 Theſ. iv. 4. O, let not theſe eyes be now defiled with ſin, by which you ſhall ſee God. Thoſe ears be inlets to vanity, which ſhall hear the *Alleluiahs* of the bleſſed. God hath deſigned honour for your bodies, O, make them not either the inſtruments or objects of ſin. There are ſins againſt the body, 1 Cor. vi. 18. Preſerve your bodies from thoſe defilements, for they are the temple of God; "If any "man defile the temple of God, him ſhall God deſtroy," 1 Cor. iii. 17.

Thirdly, Let not the contentment and accommodation of your bodies draw your ſoul into ſnares, and bring them under the power of temptations to ſin. This is a very common caſe. O how many thouſands of precious ſouls periſh eternally for the ſatisfaction of a vile body for a moment? Their ſouls muſt, becauſe their bodies cannot ſuffer. It is recorded to the immortal honour of theſe worthies, in Heb. xi. 35. "That they accepted not deliverance, that "they might obtain a better reſurrection*." They might have had a temporal reſurrection from death to life, from reproach to honour, from poverty to riches, from pains to pleaſure; but upon ſuch terms they judged it not worth acceptance. They would not expoſe their ſouls to ſecure their bodies. They had the ſame natural affections that other men have. They were made of as tender fleſh as we are, but ſuch was the care they had of their ſouls, and the hope of a better reſurrection, that they liſtened not to the complaints and whinings of their bodies. O, that we were all in the ſame reſolutions with them.

Fourthly, With-hold not, upon the pretence of the wants your own bodies may be in, that which God and conſcience bid you to communicate for the refreſhment of the ſaints, whoſe preſent neceſſities require your aſſiſtance. O, be not too indulgent to your own fleſh, and cruel to others. Certainly, the conſideration of that reward which ſhall be given you at the reſurrection, for every act of Chriſtian charity, is the greateſt ſpur and incentive in the world to it. And to that end it is urged as a motive to charity, Luke xiv. 13, 14. "When "thou makeſt a feaſt, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the "blind, and thou ſhalt be bleſſed; for they cannot recompenſe "thee: for thou ſhalt be recompenſed at the reſurrection of the "juſt." It was the opinion of an eminent modern divine†, that

* No man can rejoice both in this life and that which is to come, but he muſt neceſſarily let go the one, who would enjoy the other. *Aug.*

† Mr Marſhal.

Digitized by Google

no man living, fully underſtands and believes that ſcripture, Mat. xxv. 40. "In as much as you have done it to one of the leaſt "of theſe my brethren, you have done it unto me." How few ſaints would be expoſed to daily wants and neceſſities, if that ſcripture were but fully underſtood and believed!

Inf. 3. Is Chriſt riſen from the dead, and that as a public perſon and repreſentative of believers? *How are we all concerned then to ſecure to ourſelves an intereſt in Chriſt, and conſequently in this bleſſed reſurrection?* What conſolation would be left in this world, if the hope of the reſurrection were taken away? It is this bleſſed hope that muſt ſupport you under all the *troubles* of life, and in the *agonies* of death. The ſecuring of a bleſſed reſurrection to yourſelves, is therefore the moſt deep concernment you have in this world. And it may be ſecured to yourſelves, if, upon ſerious heart-examination, you can diſcover the following evidences.

Evidence 1. *Firſt, If you are regenerated creatures*, brought forth in a new nature to God, for we are "begotten again to a lively "hope, by the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt from the dead." Chriſt's reſurrection is the ground-work of our hope. And the new birth is our title or evidence of our intereſt in it. So that until our ſouls are partakers of the ſpiritual reſurrection from the death of ſin, we can have no aſſurance our bodies ſhall be partakers of that bleſſed reſurrection to life.

"Bleſſed and holy (ſaith the Spirit), is he that hath part in the "firſt reſurrection, on ſuch the ſecond death hath no power," Rev. xx. 6. Never let unregenerate ſouls expect a comfortable meeting with their bodies again. Riſe they ſhall by God's terrible citation, at the ſound of the laſt trump, but not to the ſame end that the ſaints ariſe, nor by the ſame principle. They to whom the ſpirit is now a principle of *ſanctification*, to them he will be the principle of a joyful *reſurrection*. See then that you get gracious ſouls now, or never expect glorious bodies then.

Evidence 2. "If you be dead with Chriſt, you ſhall live again by "the life of Chriſt. If we have been planted together in the like-"neſs of his death, we ſhall be alſo in the likeneſs of his reſur-"rection," Rom. vi. 5. συμφυτοι, *planted together*. Some refer it to believers themſelves; Jews and Gentiles are planted together in Chriſt. So *Eraſmus, "Believers grow together like branches "upon the ſame root," which ſhould powerfully enforce the great goſpel-duty of unity among themſelves. But I would rather underſtand it, with reference to Chriſt and believers, with whom believers are in other ſcriptures ſaid to ſuffer together, and be glorified together; to die together, and live together; to be crucified

* *In unum concreſcere vel coaleſcere.*

Digitized by Google

together, and buried together; all noting the communion they have with Christ, both in his death, and in his life. Now, if the power of Christ's death, i. e. the mortifying influence of it, have been upon our hearts, killing their lusts, deadening their affections, and flatting their appetites to the creature, then the power of his life, or resurrection, shall come (like the animating dew) upon our dead withered bodies, to revive and raise them up to live with him in glory.

Evidence 3. *If your hearts and affections be now with Christ in heaven, your bodies in due time shall be there also*, and conformed to his glorious body. So you find it, Phil. iii. 20, 21. "For our "conversation is in heaven, from whence we look for the Saviour, "the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it "may be fashioned like unto his own glorious body," "The body is here called vile, or the body of our vileness*." Not as God made it, but as sin hath marred it. Not *absolutely*, and in itself, but *relatively*, and in comparison of what it will be in its second edition, at the resurrection. Then those scattered bones and dispersed dust, like pieces of old broken battered silver, will be new cast, and wrought in the best and newest fashion, even like to Christ's glorious body. Whereof we have this evidence, that our conversation is already heavenly. The temper, frame, and disposition of our souls is already so; therefore the frame and temper of our bodies in due time shall be so.

Evidence 4. *If you strive now by any means to attain the resurrection of the dead, no doubt but you shall then attain what you now strive for.* This was Paul's great ambition, "that by any means he "might attain the resurrection of the dead," Phil. iii. 11. He means not simply a resurrection from the dead, for that all men shall attain, whether they strive for it or no. But by a *metonymy* of the *subject* for the *adjunct*, he intends that complete holiness and perfection, which shall attend the state of the resurrection, so it is expounded, ver. 12. So then, if God have raised in your hearts a vehement desire, and assiduous endeavour after a perfect freedom from sin, and full conformity to God, in the beauties of holiness; that very love of holiness, your present pantings, and tendencies after perfection, speak you to be the persons designed for it.

Evidence 5. *If you are such as do good in your generation.* If you be fruitful and useful men and women in the world, you shall have part in this blessed resurrection, John v. 28, 29. "All that are in "the graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth; they that "have done good unto the resurrection of life." Now it is not

* Το σωμα της ταπειγωσεως ημων.

Digitized by Google

every act *materially* good, that entitles a man to this priviledge; but the same requisites that the * schoolmen assign to make a good prayer, are also necessary to every good work. The person, matter, manner, and end, must be good. Nor is it any single good act, but a *series* and *course* of holy actions, that is here meant. What a spur should this be to us all, as (indeed the apostle makes it, closing up the doctrine of the resurrection, with this solemn exhortation, 1 Cor. xv. 58. with which I also close mine) "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always "abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as ye know that "your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift.

SERMON XL.

The ASCENSION of CHRIST illustrated, and variously improved, being the second Step of his EXALTATION.

JOHN XX. 17.

Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not: for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God.

IN all the former sermons, we have been following Christ thro' his humiliation, from the time that he left the blessed bosom of the Father: and now having finished the whole course of his obedience on earth, and risen again from the dead; we must, in this discourse, follow him back again into heaven, and lodge him in that bosom of ineffable delight and love, which for our sakes, he so freely left. For it was not his end in rising from the dead, to live such a low animal life as this is, but to live a most glorious life, as an enthroned King in heaven; upon which state he was now ready to enter, as he tells Mary in the text, and bids her tell it to the disciples, "Go, tell my brethren, that I ascend to my Fa-"ther," &c.

In the former verses you find Mary waiting at Christ's sepulchre, in a very pensive frame; exceedingly troubled, because she knew not what was become of Christ, ver. 15. In the next verse, Christ calls her by her name, *Mary*; she knowing the voice, turned her-

* *Si bonus bona facit bene ad bonum*; i. e. If one is good, he does what is good in a good manner, and for a good end.

Digitized by Google

ſelf, and anſwered, *Rabboni.* And as a ſoul tranſported with joy*, ruſhes into his arms, as deſirous to claſp and embrace him. But Jeſus ſaid, "Touch me not, &c.

In which words we have Chriſt's inhibition, "Touch me not:" Strange that Chriſt, who rendered himſelf ſo kind and tender to all, that not only admitted, but commanded Thomas to put his finger into his wounds, ſhould forbid Mary to touch him; but this was not for want of love to Mary; for he gives another reaſon for it preſently, "I am not yet aſcended;" i. e. ſay ſome, the time for embracing will be when we are in heaven. Then and there ſhall be the place and time, we ſhall embrace one another for evermore. So Auguſtin. Or, thou doteſt too much upon my preſent ſtate, as if I had now attained the very ακμη, culminating point of my exaltation. When as yet I am not aſcended; ſo Cameron and Calvin expound it. Or laſtly, Chriſt would ſignify hereby that it was not his will and pleaſure in ſo great a juncture of things as this, to ſpend time now in expreſſing (this way) her affections to him; but rather to ſhew it by haſtening about his ſervice. Which is

The *ſecond* thing obſerveable, viz. his injunction upon Mary, to carry the tidings of his reſurrection to the diſciples. In which injunction we have,

Firſt, The perſons to whom this meſſage was ſent, *my brethren*, ſo he calls the diſciples. A ſweet compellation, and full of love. Much like that of Joſeph to his brethren, Gen. xlv. 4. ſave only that there is much more tenderneſs in this than that; for he twits them in the ſame breath with what they had done againſt him: "I am Joſeph your brother, whom ye ſold;" but in this it is, "Go, tell my brethren," without the leaſt mention of their cowardice or unkindneſs. And,

Secondly, The meſſage itſelf. "Tell my brethren, I aſcend to "my Father, and your Father; to my God, and your God;" αναβαινω, *I aſcend.* It is put in the preſent tenſe, as if he had been aſcending; though he did not aſcend in ſome weeks after this; but he ſo expreſſes it, to ſhew what was the next part of his work, which he was to act in heaven for them; and how much his heart was ſet upon it, and longed to be about it, "I aſcend to my Father, "and your Father; to my God, and your God." Not our Father, or God in common; but mine and yours in a different manner. Yours by right of donation, mine in a different manner. Yours by right of dominion, mine (in reference to my human nature) not only by right of creation, though ſo too; but alſo by

* Mary would embrace Chriſt, out of her great love to him, and joy that ſhe had ſeen him again in the fleſh. *Bucer. on the place.*

Digitized by Google

ſpecial covenant and confederation. * By predeſtination of my manhood, to the grace of perſonal union, by deſignation of me, to the glorious office of Mediator. *My Father*, as I am God, by eternal generation. As man, by collation of the grace of union. And your Father by ſpiritual adoption and regeneration. Thus he is my God, and your God; my Father, and your Father. This is the ſubſtance of that comfortable meſſage, ſent by Mary to the penſive diſciples. Hence the obſervation is,

Doct. *That our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, did not only riſe from the dead, but alſo aſcended into heaven; there to diſpatch all that remained to be done for the completing the ſalvation of his people.*

So much the apoſtle plainly witneſſeth, Eph. iv. 10. "He that "deſcended, is the ſame alſo that aſcended up far above all hea- "vens," i. e. all the aſpectable heavens. A full and faithful account whereof the ſeveral evangeliſts have given us, Mark xvi. 19. Luke xxiv. 51. This is ſometimes called his *going away*, as John xvi. 7. Sometimes his *being exalted*, Acts ii. 33. Sometimes his *being made higher than the heavens*, Heb. vii. 26. And ſometimes his *entering within the vail*, Heb. vi. 19, 20. All which are but ſo many *ſynonymous* phraſes, expreſſing his aſcenſion, in a very pleaſant variety.

Now for the opening this act of Chriſt, we will bind up the whole in the ſatisfaction of theſe ſix queſtions. 1. Who aſcended? 2. Whence did he aſcend? 3. Whither? 4. When? 5. How? 6. and laſtly, Why did he aſcend? And theſe will take in what is needful for you to be acquainted with in this point.

Firſt, Who aſcended? This the apoſtle anſwers, Eph. iv. 10. "the ſame that deſcended," viz. Chriſt. And himſelf tells us in the text, "I aſcend." † "And though the aſcenſion were of "Chriſt's whole perſon, yet it was but a figurative and improper "expreſſion, with reſpect to his divine nature, but it agrees moſt "properly to the humanity of Chriſt, which really changed places "and conditions by it." And hence it is that it is ſaid, John xvi. 28. "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; "again, I leave the world, and go to my Father." He goes away, and we ſee him no more. As God, he is ſpiritually with us ſtill, even to the end of the world; But as man, "the heavens "muſt contain him till the reſtitution of all things," Acts iii. 21.

Secondly, Whence Chriſt aſcended?

* Mr Henry Jeanes's ſecond part of the mixture of ſcholaſtical and practical divinity, p. 273.

† *Aſcenſione totius fuit perſonæ, naturæ tamen divinæ non convenit niſi figurate: Sed humanæ naturæ maxime proprie convenit*, &c. Amef. Med. p. 114.

Digitized by Google

I anſwer, more generally, he is ſaid to aſcend from this world, to leave the world. That is the *terminus a quo*, John xvi. 28. but more particularly, it was from Mount Olivet, near unto Jeruſalem. The very place where he began his laſt ſorrowful tragedy. There, where his heart began to be ſadded, there is it now made glad. O, what a difference was there betwixt the frame Chriſt was in, in that mount before his paſſion, and this he is now in, at his aſcenſion! But,

Thirdly, Whither did he aſcend?

It is manifeſt it was into the third heavens: the throne of God, and place of the bleſſed; where all the ſaints ſhall be with him for ever. It is ſaid to be far above all heavens; i. e. the heavens which we ſee, for they are but the pavement of that ſtately palace of the great King. He is gone (ſaith the apoſtle) *within the vail*, i. e. into the moſt holy place. And into his Father's houſe, John xiv. 2. And he is alſo ſaid to go to the "place where he was be-"fore," John vi. 62. back again to that ſweet and glorious boſom of delight and love, from whence at his incarnation he came.

Fourthly, When did Chriſt aſcend? Was it preſently as ſoon as he aroſe from the dead?

No, not ſo, for "after his reſurrection (ſaith Luke) he was "ſeen of them forty days, ſpeaking of the things pertaining to "the kingdom of God." And truly the care and love of Chriſt to his people was very manifeſt in this his ſtay with them*. He had ineffable glory prepared for him in heaven, and awaiting his coming, but he will not go to poſſeſs it, till he had ſettled all things for the good of his church here. For in this time he confirmed the truth of his reſurrection, gave charge to the apoſtles concerning the diſcipline and order of his houſe or kingdom: which was but needful, ſince he intended that their Acts ſhould be rules to future churches. So long it was neceſſary he ſhould ſtay. And when he had ſet all things in order, he would ſtay no longer, "leſt he ſhould ſeem to affect a terrene life†." And beſides, he had work of great concernment to do for us in the other world. He deſired to be no longer here, than he had work to do for God and ſouls. A good pattern for the ſaints.

Fifthly, How did Chriſt aſcend into heaven?

Here it is worthy our obſervation, that Chriſt aſcended as a *public perſon* or forerunner, in our names, and upon our accounts‡.

* The weakneſs of his diſciples required the delay of his ſeparation from them. *Ames.*

† *Ne terrenam vitam videretur meditari.* Ames.

‡ He by his entrance into heaven gives us the ſtrongeſt conſolation, for as he came down from heaven, not on his own but our account, ſo he hath taken poſſeſſion of heaven to prepare a place and habitation there for us. *Pareus on this place.*

Digitized by Google

So it is said expressly, Heb. vi. 20. speaking of the most holy place within the vail; *whither* (saith he) *the forerunner is for us entered.* His entering into heaven as our forerunner implies both his *public capacity* and *precedency.*

First, His *public capacity*, as one that went upon our business to God. So he himself speaks, John xiv. 2. "I go before to pre-"pare a place for you." To take possession of heaven in your names. The *forerunner* hath respect to others that were to come to heaven after him, in their several generations; for whom he hath taken up mansions, which are kept for them against their coming.

Secondly, It notes *precedency*, he is our *forerunner*, but he himself had no *forerunner.* Never any entered into heaven before him, but such as entered in his name, and through the virtue of his merits. He was the first that ever entered into heaven *directly, immediately*, in his own name, and upon his own account. But all the fathers who died before him entered in his name. To the holiest of them all, God would have said as Elisha to Jehoram, 2 Kings iii. 14. Were it not that I had respect to the person of my Son, in whose name and right you come, I would not look upon you. You must go back again, heaven were no place for you. No, not for you, Abraham, nor for you, Moses.

Secondly, He ascended *triumphantly* into heaven. To this good expositors * refer that which in the *type* is spoken of David, when he lodged the *ark* in its own place, with musical instruments and shoutings; but to Christ, in the *antitype*, when he was received up *triumphantly* into glory, Psal. xlvii. 5. "God is gone up with "a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet; sing praises to "God, sing praises; sing praises unto our King, sing praises."

A cloud is prepared, as a royal chariot, to carry up the King of glory to his princely pavilion †. "A cloud received him out of "their sight," Luke xxiv. 51. And then a royal guard of mighty angels surrounded the chariot, if not for support, yet for greater state and solemnity of their Lord's ascension. And oh what jubilations of the blessed angels were heard in heaven! How was the whole city of God moved at his coming! For look as when "he "brought his first-begotten into the world, he said, let all the "angels of God worship him," Heb. i. 6. So at his return thither again, when he had finished redemption-work, there were no less demonstrations given by those blessed creatures of their delight and joy in it. The very heavens echoed and resounded on

* Molerus in loc. Geirus Aynsworth. † Mr Case in his Pisgah.

Digitized by Google

that account. Yea, the triumph is not ended at this day, nor ever ſhall.

It is ſaid, Dan. vii. 13, 14. "I ſaw, (ſaith the prophet) in the "night viſions, and behold one like the Son of man came with "the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and "they brought him near to him. And there was given him do-"minion, and glory, and a kingdom; that all people, nations "and languages ſhould ſerve him." This viſion of Daniel's was accompliſhed in Chriſt's aſcenſion, when *they*, i. e. the angels, brought him to the *Ancient of days*, i. e. to God the Father, who, to expreſs his welcome to Chriſt, gave him glory, and a kingdom. And ſo it is, and ought to be expounded*. The Father received him with open arms, rejoicing exceedingly to ſee him again in heaven; therefore God is ſaid to "receive him up into glory," 1 Tim. iii. 16. For that which, with reſpect to Chriſt, is called *aſcenſion*, is, with reſpect to the Father, called *aſſumption*. He went up, and the Father received him. Yea, received ſo as none ever was received before him, or ſhall be received after him.

Thirdly, Chriſt aſcended *munificently*, ſhedding forth, abundantly, ineſtimable gifts upon his church at his aſcenſion. As in the Roman triumphs they did *ſpargere miſſilia* †, beſtow their largeſſes upon the people: ſo did our Lord when he aſcended; "wherefore he ſaith, when he aſcended up on high, he led cap-"tivity captive; and gave gifts unto men." The place to which the apoſtle refers, is Pſal. lxviii. 17, 18. where you have both the triumph and munificence with which Chriſt went up excellently ſet forth together.

"The chariots of God, (ſaith the Pſalmiſt) are twenty thou-"ſand, even thouſands of angels; the Lord is among them, as in "Sinai, in the holy place. Thou haſt aſcended on high, thou "haſt led captivity captive, thou haſt received gifts for men; yea, "for the rebellious alſo, that God might dwell among them." Which words, in their literal ſenſe, are a celebration of that famous victory and triumph of David over the enemies of God, recorded 2 Sam. viii. Theſe conquered enemies bring him ſeveral ſorts of preſents, all which he dedicated to the Lord. The ſpiritual ſenſe is, that juſt ſo our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, when he had overcome by his death on the croſs, and now triumphed in his aſcenſion, he takes the parts and gifts of his enemies, and gives them, by their converſion to the church, for its uſe and ſervice: thus he received gifts, even for the *rebellious* ‡, i. e. ſanctifies the

* See Deodat. and Engliſh Annot. *&c.*

† Princes, when triumphing after victory, uſe to diſperſe great preſents and ſums of money among the people, congratulating their triumph with joyous ſhouts.

‡ Thou doſt raiſe up teachers of thy church, among thoſe who hate and perſe-

Digitized by Google

natural gifts and faculties of such as hated his people before, dedicating them to the Lord, in his people's service. Thus, (as one observes) Tertullian, Origen, Austin, and Jerome, came into Canaan, laden with Egyptian gold. Meaning they came into the church richly laden with natural learning and abilities. Austin was a Manichee, Cyprian a magician, learned Bradwardine a scornful, proud naturalist, who once said, when he read Paul's epistles, *Dedignabar esse parvulus*; he scorned such childish things, but afterwards became a very useful man in the church of God. And even Paul himself was as fierce an enemy to the church as breathed on earth, till Christ gave him into its bosom by conversion, and then no mere man ever did the Lord and his people greater service than he. Men of all sorts, greater and smaller lights, have been given to the church. Officers of all sorts were given it by Christ. Extraordinary and temporary, as prophets, apostles, evangelists; ordinary and standing, as pastors and teachers, which remain to this day, Eph. iv. 8, 9. And those stars are fixed in the church-heaven by a most firm establishment, 1 Cor. xii. 28. Thousands now in heaven, and thousands on earth also, are blessing Christ at this day for these his ascension-gifts.

Fourthly, Our Lord Jesus Christ ascended most comfortably, for whilst he was blessing his people, he was parted from them, Luke xxiv. 50, 51. Therein making good to them what is said by him, John xiii. 1. "Having loved his own, he loved them to the "end." There was a great deal of love manifested by Christ in this very last act of his in this world. The last sight they had of him in this world was a most sweet and encouraging one. They heard nothing from his lips but love, they saw nothing in his face but love, till he mounted his triumphant chariot, and was taken out of their sight.

Surely these blessings at parting were sweet and rich ones. For the matter of them, they were the mercies which his blood had so lately purchased for them. And for their extent, they were not only intended for them who had the happiness to be upon the place with him from whence he ascended; but they reach us as well as them; and will reach the last saint that shall be upon the earth till he come again. For they were but representatives of the future churches, Matt. xxviii. 20. and in blessing them, he blesseth us also. And by this we may be satisfied that Christ carried an heart full of love to his people away with him to heaven; since his love so abounded in the last act that ever he did in this

---

cute thy people; and, from time to time, bring many of thy enemies to this thy kingdom. *Mol. on the place.*

Digitized by Google

world: and left such a demonstration of his tenderness with them at parting.

Fifthly, He ascended, as well as rose again, by his own power. He was not merely passive in his ascension, but it was his own act. *He went to heaven.* Therefore it is said, Acts i. 10. *He went up*, viz. by his own divine power*. And this plainly evinceth him to be God, for no mere creature ever mounted itself from earth, far above all heavens, as Christ did.

Sixthly, and lastly, Why did Christ ascend?

I answer: His ascension was necessary upon many and great accounts. For,

First, If Christ had not ascended, he could not have interceded, as now he doth in heaven for us. And do but take away Christ's intercession, and you starve the hope of the saints. For what have we to succour ourselves with, under the daily surprises of sin, but this, "That if any man sin, we have an advocate [with the Fa-"ther]:" mark that, *with the Father*: a friend upon the place: one that abides there, on purpose to transact all our affairs, and as a surety for the peace betwixt God and us.

Secondly, If Christ had not ascended, you could not have entered into heaven when you die. For he went to "prepare a place "for you," John xiv. 2. He was, as I said before, the first that entered into heaven directly, and in his own name; and had he not done so, we would not have entered when we die, in his name. The Fore-runner made way for all that are coming on, in their several generations, after him. Nor could your bodies have ascended after their resurrection, but in the virtue of Christ's ascension. For he ascended, as was said before, in the capacity of our head and representative; to his Father, and our Father: For us, and himself too.

Thirdly, If Christ had not ascended, he could not have been inaugurated, and installed in the glory he now enjoys in heaven. This world is not the place where perfect felicity and glory dwell. And then, how had the promise of the Father been made good to him? Or our glory, (which consists in being with, and conformed to him), where had it been? "Ought not Christ to suffer, and to "enter into his glory?" Luke xxiv. 25.

Fourthly, If Christ had not ascended, how could we have been satisfied, that his payment on the cross made full satisfaction to God, and that now God hath no more bills to bring in against us? How is it that the Spirit conviceth the world of righteousness,

* His divine power was the cause of his ascension.——but that which likewise contributed to it, was the condition of his glorified body, which can move upwards, as well as downwards. *Amef.*

Digitized by Google

John xvi. 9, 10. but from Christ's going to the Father, and returning hither no more? which gives evidence of God's full content and satisfaction, both with his person and work.

Fifthly, How should we have enjoyed the great blessings of the Spirit and ordinances, if Christ had not ascended? And surely, we could not have been without either. If Christ had not gone away, "the Comforter had not come," John xvi. 7. he begins where Christ had finished. For he takes of his, and shews it to us, John xvi. 14. And therefore it is said, John xvii. 39. "The Holy "Ghost was not given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." He was then given as a sanctifying spirit, but not given in that measure, as afterwards he was, to furnish and qualify men with gifts for service. And indeed, by Christ's ascension, both his sanctifying, and his ministering gifts were shed forth, more commonly and more abundantly upon men. These fell from him when he ascended, as Elijah's mantle did from him, so that whatsoever good of conversion, edification, support, or comfort you receive from spiritual ordinances, he hath shed forth that, which you now see and feel. *It is the fruit of Christ's ascension.*

Sixthly, and *lastly*, If Christ had not ascended, how had all the types and prophecies, that prefigured and foretold it, been fulfilled? "And the scriptures cannot be broken," John x. 35. So that, upon all these accounts, it was expedient that he should go away. It was for his glory, and for our advantage. Though we lost the comfort of his bodily presence by it, yet if "we loved "him, we would rejoice he went to the Father," John xiv. 28. We ought to have rejoiced in his advancement, though it had been to our loss; but when it is so much for our benefit, as well as his glory, it is a matter of joy on both sides, that he is ascended to his Father, and our Father; to his God, and to our God. From the several blessings flowing to us out of Christ's ascension, it was that he charged his people not to be troubled at his leaving of them, John xiv. And hence learn,

Inference 1. *Did Christ ascend into heaven? Is our Jesus, our treasure indeed there? Where then should the hearts of believers be, but in heaven, where their Lord, their life is?* Surely, saints, it is not good that your love, and your Lord should be in two several countries, said one that is now with him. Up, and hasten after your lover, that he and you may be together. Christians, you ascended with him, virtually, when he ascended; you shall ascend to him, personally, hereafter; Oh that you would ascend to him, spiritually, in acts of faith, love, and desires daily. *Sursum corda*, up with your hearts, was the form used by the ancient church at the sacrament. How good were it, if we could say with the apostle, Phil. iii. 20. "Our conversation is in heaven, from whence we

Digitized by Google

" look for the Saviour." An heart aſcendant, is the beſt evidence of your intereſt in Chriſt's aſcenſion.

Inf. 2. Did Chriſt go to heaven as a forerunner? *What haſte ſhould we make to follow him?* He ran to heaven: he ran thither before us. Did he run to glory, and ſhall we linger? did he flee as an eagle towards heaven, and we creep like ſnails? Come Chriſtians, " Lay aſide every weight, and the ſin that ſo eaſily beſets " you, and run with patience the race ſet before you, looking unto Jeſus, Heb. xii. 1, 2. The Captain of our ſalvation is entered within the gates of the new Jeruſalem, and calls to us out of heaven to haſten to him; propoſing the greateſt encouragements to them that are following after him, ſaying, " He that overcomes " ſhall ſit with me in my throne, as I alſo overcame, and am ſet " down with my Father in his throne," Rev. iii. 22. How tedious ſhould it ſeem to us, to live ſo long at a diſtance from our Lord Jeſus!

Inf. 3. Did Chriſt aſcend ſo triumphantly, leading captivity captive? *How little reaſon then have believers to fear their conquered enemies?* Sin, Satan, and every enemy, were in that day led away in triumph, dragged at Chriſt's chariot wheels, brought after him as it were in chains. It is a lovely ſight to ſee the necks of thoſe tyrants under the foot of our Joſhua. He made at that day, " an open ſhew of them," Col. ii. 15. Their ſtrength is broken for ever. In this he ſhewed himſelf more than a conqueror; for he *conquered and triumphed too.* Satan was then trod under his feet, and he hath promiſed to tread him under our feet alſo, and that ſhortly, Rom. xvi. 20. ſome power our enemies yet retain, the ſerpent may bruiſe our heel, but Chriſt hath cruſhed his head.

Inf. 4. Did Chriſt aſcend ſo munificently, ſhedding forth ſo many mercies upon his people? mercies of ineſtimable value, reſerved on purpoſe to adorn that day? *O then ſee that you abuſe not thoſe precious aſcenſion-gifts of Chriſt, but value and improve them as the choiceſt mercies.* Now, the aſcenſion-gifts, as I told you, are either the ordinances and officers of the church, (for he then gave them paſtors and teachers,) or the Spirit that furniſhed the church with all its gifts. Beware you abuſe not either of theſe.

Firſt, Abuſe not the ordinances and officers of Chriſt. This is a ſin that no nation is plunged deeper into the guilt of, than this nation, and no age more than this. Surely God hath *written to us the great things of his law, and we have accounted them ſmall things.* We have been looſe, wanton, ſceptical profeſſors for the moſt part, that have had nice and coy ſtomachs, that could not reliſh plain, wholeſome truths, except ſo and ſo modified to our humours. For this the Lord hath a controverſy with the nation, and by a ſore judgment, he hath begun to rebuke this ſin already. And I doubt

Digitized by Google

not, before he make an end, plain truths will down with us, and we shall bless God for them.

Secondly, But in the next place, see that you abuse not the Spirit, whom God sent from heaven at his ascension, to supply his bodily absence among us, and is the great pledge of his care for, and tender love to his people. Now take heed that you do not vex him by your disobedience; nor grieve him by your unkindnesses; nor quench him by your sinful neglects of duty, or abuse of light. O deal kindly with the Spirit, and obey his voice: comply with his designs, and yield up yourselves to his guidance and conduct. Methinks, to be intreated by the love of the Spirit, Rom. xv. 30. should be as great an argument as to be intreated for Christ's sake. Now, to persuade all the saints to be tender of grieving the Spirit by sin, let me urge a few considerations proper to the point under hand.

Consid. 1. *First, He was the first and principal mercy that Christ received for you at his first entrance into heaven.* It was the first thing he asked of God when he came to heaven. So he speaks, John xiv. 16, 17. "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you "another comforter, that he may abide with you." No sooner had he set foot upon the place, but the first thing, the great thing that was upon his heart to ask the Father for us was, that the Spirit might forthwith be dispatched, and sent down to his people. So that the Spirit is *the first-born of mercies*; and deserves the first place in our hearts and esteem.

Consid. 2. *Secondly, The Spirit comes not in his own name to us*, (though, if so, he deserves a dear welcome for his own sake, and for the benefits we receive by him, which are ineftimable), *but he comes to us in the name, and in the love, both of the Father and the Son.* As one authorized and delegated by them; bringing his credentials under both their hands and seals, John xv. 26. "But when "the Comforter is come, whom I will send to you from the Fa-"ther:" Mark, I will send him from the Father; and in John xiv. 26. the Father is said to "send him in Christ's name." So that he is the messenger that comes from both these great and holy persons. And if you have any love for the God that made you, any kindness for the Christ that died for you, shew it by your obedience to the Spirit that comes from them both, and in both their names to us, and who will be both offended and grieved, if you grieve him. O therefore give him an entertainment worthy of one that comes to you in the name of the Lord. In the Father's name, and in the Son's name.

Consid. 3. *Thirdly*, But that is not the only consideration that should cause you to beware of grieving the Spirit, because he is sent in the name of such great and dear persons, to you, but he *de-*

Digitized by Google

ſerves better entertainment than any of the ſaints give him, for his own ſake, and upon his own account, and that upon a double ſcore, viz. of his nature and office.

Firſt, On the account of his nature; for he is God co-equal with the Father and Son in nature and dignity, 2 Sam. xxiii. 23. "The Spirit of the Lord ſpake by me, and his word was in my "tongue; the God of Iſrael ſaid; the Rock of Iſrael ſpake to "me." So that you ſee he is God. The Rock of Iſrael. God *omnipotent*, for he created all things, Gen. i. 2. God *omnipreſent*, filling all things, Pſal. cxxxix. 7. God *omniſcient*, who knows your hearts, Rom. ix. 1. Beware of him therefore, and grieve him not, for in ſo doing you grieve God.

Secondly, Upon the account of his office, and the benefits we receive by him. We are obliged, even on the ſcore of gratitude and ingenuity, to obey him; for he is ſent in the quality of an advocate to help us to pray; to indite our requeſts for us; to teach us what and how to aſk of God, Rom. viii. 26. He comes to us as a Comforter, John xiv. 16. And none like him. His work is to take of Chriſt's *and ſhew it to us**, *i. e.* to take of his death, reſurrection, aſcenſion, yea, of his very preſent interceſſion in heaven, and ſhew it to us. He can be with us in a moment, he can, (as † one well obſerves), tell you what were the very laſt thoughts Chriſt was thinking in heaven about you. It was he that formed the body of Chriſt in the womb, and ſo prepared him to be a ſacrifice for us. He filled that humanity with his unexampled fulneſs ‡. So fitting and anointing him for the diſcharge of his office.

It is he that puts efficacy into the ordinances, and without him they would be a dead letter. It was he that bleſſed them to your conviction and converſion§. For if angels had been the preachers, no converſion had followed without the Spirit. It is he that is the *vinculum unionis*, bond of union betwixt Chriſt and your ſouls, without which you could never have had intereſt in Chriſt, or communion with Chriſt. It was he that ſo often hath helped your infirmities, when you knew not what to ſay; comforted your hearts when they were overwhelmed within you, and you knew not what to do; preſerved you many thouſand times from ſin and ruin, when you have been upon the ſlippery brink of it in temptations. It is he, (in his ſanctifying-work), that is the beſt

* John xvi. 14.
† Mr. Tho. Goodwin.
‡ Luke i. 35. Iſa. lxi. 1. Col. i. 19.
§ 2 Cor. ix. 6. John xvi. 9. 1 Pet. i. 12. 1 John iii. 24. Rom. viii. 9, 26. John xiv. 26. Ezek. xxxvi. 17.

Digitized by Google

evidence your ſouls have for heaven. It were endleſs to enumerate the mercies you have by him. And now, reader, doſt thou not bluſh to think how unworthy thou haſt treated ſuch a friend? For which of all theſe his offices or benefits doſt thou grieve and quench him? O grieve not the Holy Spirit whom Chriſt ſent as ſoon as ever he went to heaven, in his Father's name, and in his own name, to perform all theſe offices for you.

Inf. 5. Is Chriſt aſcended to the Father as our fore-runner? *Then the door of ſalvation ſtands open to all believers, and by virtue of Chriſt's aſcenſion, they alſo ſhall aſcend after him, far above all viſible heavens**. O my friends, what place hath Chriſt prepared and taken up for you! what a ſplendid habitation hath he provided for you! "God is not aſhamed to be called your God; for he hath "prepared for you a city," Heb. xi. 16. In that city Chriſt hath provided manſions, and reſting-places for your everlaſting abode, John xiv. 2. and keeps them for you till your coming. O how auguſt and glorious a dwelling is that, where ſun, and moon, and ſtars, ſhall ſhine as much below your feet, as they are now above your heads? Yea, ſuch is the love Chriſt hath to the believer, that, as one ſaith, if thou only hadſt been the choſen of God, Chriſt would have built that houſe for himſelf and thee. Now it is for himſelf, for thee, and for many more, who ſhall inherit with thee. God ſend us a joyful meeting within the vail with our Fore-runner, and ſweeten our paſſage into it, with many a foreſight and foretaſte thereof. And, in the mean time, let the love of a Saviour enflame our hearts, ſo that whenever we caſt a look towards that place, where our Forerunner is for us entered, our ſouls may ſay, with melting affections, *Thanks be to God for Jeſus Chriſt*; and again, *Bleſſed be God for his unſpeakable gift.*

* The hope of future inheritance is moſt fully ſecured to us in our Head, and we are ſet down together with him in heaven, Eph. ii. 6. *Synopſis purioris Theol. Diſp.* 28. *p.* 342.

Digitized by Google

SERMON XLI.

The Session of CHRIST at GOD's right-hand explained and applied, being the third Step of his glorious EXALTATION.

HEB. i. 3.

When he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right-hand of the Majesty on high.

CHRIST being returned again to his Father, having finished his whole work on earth, is there bid by the Father to sit down in the seat of honour and rest. A seat prepared for him at God's right hand, that makes it honourable; and all his enemies as a footstool under his feet that makes it easy. How much is the state and condition of Jesus Christ changed in a few days! Here he groaned, wept, laboured, suffered, sweat, yea, sweat blood, and found no rest in this world, but when he comes to heaven, there he enters into rest. Sits down for ever in the highest and easiest throne, prepared by the Father for him when he had done his work. "When he had by himself purged our sins, he sat "down," &c.

The scope of this epistle is to demonstrate Christ to be the fulness of all legal types and ceremonies, and that whatever light glimmered to the world through them, yet it was but as the light of the day-star, to the light of the sun.

In this chapter, Christ the subject of the epistle, is described; and particularly, in this third verse, he is described three ways.

First, By his essential and primeval glory and dignity, he is απαυγασμα, the brightness of his Father's glory, the very splendor of glory, the very refulgency of that son of glory. "* The primary "reason of that appellation is with respect to his eternal and ine- "fable generation, light of light, as the Nicene creed expresses "it. As a beam of light proceeding from the sun. And the se- "condary reason of it, is with respect to men," for look as the sun communicates its light and influence to us by its beams, which it projects; so doth God communicate his goodness, and manifest himself to us, by Christ. "Yea, he is the *express image*, or cha- "racter of his person. Not as the impressed image of the seal up- "on the wax, but as the engraving in the seal itself†." Thus he is described by his essential glory.

* *Ratio appellationis primaria est respectu Patris cælestis a quo ab æterno, per ineffabilem generationem instar luminis, de lumine resplenduit, secundaria respectu hominum*, &c. Glass. Rhet. p. 174.

† Χαρακτηρ *insculpere dicitur, non tam imaginem ex sigillo ceræ impressam, quam ipsum sigillum denotare.* Glass. Rhet. sac. p. 159.

Digitized by Google

Secondly, He is described by the work he wrought here on earth, in his humbled state, and it was a glorious work, and that wrought out by his own single hand, "When he had by himself "purged our sins." A work that all the angels in heaven could not do, but Christ did it.

Thirdly, and lastly, He is described by his glory, the which (as a reward of that work) he now enjoys in heaven. "When he "had by himself purged our sins, he sat down on the right-hand "of the Majesty on high," i. e. the Lord clothed him with the greatest power, and highest honour, that heaven itself could afford; for so much this phrase of "sitting down on the right-"hand of the Majesty" imports, as will appear in the explication of this point, which is the result of this clause, viz.

Doct. *That when our Lord Jesus Christ had finished his work on earth, he was placed in the seat of the highest honour, and authority; at the right-hand of God in heaven.*

This truth is transformingly glorious. Stephen had but a glimpse of Christ at his Father's right-hand, and it caused "his face to "shine, as it had been the face of an angel," Acts vii. 56. This, his high advancement, was foretold and promised before the work of redemption was taken in hand, Psal. cx. 1. "The Lord said "unto my Lord, sit thou at my right-hand, until I make thine "enemies thy footstool." And this promise was punctually performed to Christ, after his resurrection and ascension, in his supreme exaltation, far above all created beings, in heaven and earth, Eph. i. 20, 21, 22. We shall here open two things in the doctrinal part, viz. What is meant by God's right-hand; and what is implied in Christ's sitting there, with his enemies for a footstool.

First, What are we to understand here by God's right-hand *? It is obvious enough, that the expression is not proper, but figurative and borrowed. God hath no hand, right or left; but it is a condescending expression, wherein God stoops to the creature's understanding, and by it he would have us understand honour, power, and nearness.

First, The right-hand is the hand of honour, the upper hand, where we place those whom we highly esteem and honour. So Solomon placed his mother in a seat at his right-hand, 1 Kings ii. 19.

* The right-hand of God denotes divine honour and glory, on which the Son of God, who existed before all ages, as God, in the highest, co-essential with the Father, and incarnate in the latter times, sat down with his glorified body. *Dr. mast. lib. 4. c. 2. de orth. fide.*

Digitized by Google

So, in token of honour, God sets Christ at his right-hand; which, on that account, in the text is called the right-hand of *Majesty*. God hath therein expressed more favour, delight, and honour to Jesus Christ, than ever he did to any creature. "To "which of the angels said he at any time, sit thou on my right-"hand?" Heb. i. 13.

Secondly, The right-hand is the hand of power: we call it the *weapon hand*, and the *working hand*. And the setting of Christ there, imports his exaltation to the highest authority, and most supreme dominion. Not that God the Father hath put himself out of his authority, and advanced Christ above himself; no, "for in that he saith he hath put all things under him, it is ma-"nifest that he is excepted which did put all things under him," 1 Cor. xv. 27. But to sit as an enthroned king at God's right-hand, imports power, yea, the most sovereign and supreme power; and so Christ himself calls the right-hand at which he sits, Matt. xxvi. 64. "Hereafter ye shall see the Son of man sitting "on the right-hand of power."

Thirdly, And as it signifies honour and power, so nearness in place, as we use to say *at one's elbow*, and so it is applied to Christ, in Psal. cx. 5. "The Lord at thy right-hand, shall strike through "kings in the day of his wrath;" i. e. the Lord, who is very near thee, present with thee, he shall subdue thine enemies. This then is what we are to understand by God's right-hand, honour, power, and nearness.

Secondly, In the next place let us see what is implied in Christ's sitting at God's right-hand, with his enemies for his footstool. And, if we attentively consider, we shall find that it implies and imports divers great and weighty things in it. As,

First, It implies the completing and perfecting of Christ's work, that he came into the world about. After his work was ended, then he sat down and rested from those labours, Heb. x. 11, 12. "Every priest standeth daily ministering, and offering oftentimes "the same sacrifices; which can never take away sins: but this "man when he had once offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever "sat down on the right-hand of God." Here he assigns a double difference betwixt Christ and the Levitical priests; they stand, which is the posture of servants; he sits, which is the posture of a Lord. They stand daily, because their sacrifices cannot take away sin; he did his work fully, by one offering; and after that, sits or rests for ever in heaven. And this (as the accurate and judicious Dr Reynolds * observes) was excellently figured to us in the ark, which was a lively type of Jesus Christ, and particularly in

* Dr Edward Reynolds, on Psalm cx. p. 35, 36.

Digitized by Google

this, it had rings by which it was carried up and down, till at last it rested in Solomon's temple, with glorious and triumphal solemnity, Psal. cxxxii. 8, 9. 2 Chron. v. 13. So Christ, while he was here on earth, being anointed with the Holy Ghost and wisdom, went about doing good, Acts x. 38. and having ceased from his works, did at last enter into his rest, Heb. v. 10. which is the heavenly temple, Rev. xi. 19.

Secondly, His * sitting down at God's right-hand, notes the high content and satisfaction of God the Father in him, and in his work. "The Lord said to my Lord, sit thou on my right-hand;" the words are brought in as the words of the Father, welcoming Christ to heaven; and (as it were) congratulating the happy accomplishment of his most difficult work. And it is as if he had said, "O my Son, what shall be done for thee this day? Thou "hast finished a great work, and in all the parts of it acquitted thy-"self as an able and faithful servant to me; what honours shall I "now bestow upon thee? The highest glory in heaven is not too "high for thee; come sit at my right-hand." O how well is he pleased with Christ, and what he hath done! He delighted greatly to behold him here in his work on earth, and by a voice from the excellent glory he told him so, when he spake from heaven to him, saying, "Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well "pleased," 2 Pet. i. 17. And himself tells us, John x. 17. "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my "life," &c. for it was a work that the heart of God had been set upon from eternity. He took infinite delight in it.

Thirdly, Christ's sitting down at God's right-hand in heaven, notes the advancement of Christ's human nature to the highest honour; even to be the object of adoration to angels and men. For it is properly his human nature that is the subject of all this honour and advancement; and being advanced to the right-hand of Majesty, it is become an object of worship and adoration. Not simply, as it is flesh and blood, but as it is personally united to the second person, and enthroned in the supreme glory of heaven.

O here is the mystery, that flesh and blood should ever be advanced to the highest throne of majesty, and being there installed in that glory, we may now direct our worship to him as *God-man*; and to this end was his humanity so advanced, that it might be adored and worshipped by all. "The Father hath committed all "judgment to the Son, that all men should honour the Son,

* They are said to sit down, who rest from their labour, and thereby refresh themselves, Gen. xviii. 1. in which sense some understand what is said of Christ. To sit at God's right-hand, i. e. in the heavens, to rest in that eternal blessedness with God, from these labours and miseries to which he voluntarily subjected himself for us. *Ravan. on the word* to sit.

Digitized by Google

"even as they honour the Father." And the Father will accept of no honour divided from his honour. Therefore it is added in the clause, "He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the "Father which hath sent him," John v. 22, 23. Hence the apostles, in the salutations of their epistles, beg for grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ; and in their *valedictions*, they desire the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ to the churches.

Fourthly, It imports the sovereignty and supremacy of Christ over all. The investiture of Christ, with authority over the empire of both worlds: for this belongs to him that sits down upon his throne. When the Father said to him*, Sit at my right-hand, he did therein deliver to him the *dispensation* and *economy* of the kingdom. Put the awful sceptre of government into his hand, and so the apostle interprets and understands it, 1 Cor. xv. 25. "He must reign till he have put all his enemies under his feet." And to this purpose, the same apostle accommodates, (if not expounds) the words of the Psalmist, "Thou madest him a little "lower than the angels," i. e. in respect of his humbled state on earth, "thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst "set him over the works of thy hands, thou hast put all things "in subjection under his feet," Heb. ii. 7, 8. He is over the spiritual kingdom, the Church, absolute Lord there, Mat. xxviii. 18, 19, 20. He is also Lord over the providential kingdom, the whole world, Psal. cx. 2. And this providential kingdom, being subordinate to his spiritual kingdom; he orders and rules this, for the advantage and benefit thereof, Eph. i. 22.

Fifthly, To sit at God's right-hand with his enemies for a footstool, *implies Christ to be a conqueror over all his enemies*. To have his enemies under his feet, notes perfect conquest and complete victory. As when Joshua set his foot upon the necks of the kings: So Tamerlane made proud Bajazet his footstool†. They trampled his name, and his saints, under their feet, and Christ will tread them under his feet. It is true indeed this victory is incomplete and inconsummate; for now "we see not yet all things put under "him, (saith the apostle) but we see Jesus crowned with glory "and honour," and that is enough. Enough to shew the power of his enemies is now broken; and though they make some oppo-

* Therefore this sitting down of Christ at the Father's right-hand, does not signify properly that glory and essential kingdom which was common to the Son of God with the Father from eternity, for in this respect even the Holy Spirit sits at the right-hand of God; but the œconomical and voluntary kingdom, over which he is appointed as Θεάνθρωπος, i. e. God-man and Mediator by the Father, for the gathering in and defending of his church. *Synopsi pur. Theol. Disp.* 28. *p.* 343.

† The man who so often terrified the city of Constantinople, was a dog and a footstool under Tamerlane. *Aurel. Vict.*

Digitized by Google

ſition ſtill, yet it is to no purpoſe at all; for he is ſo infinitely above them, that they muſt fall before him; it is not with Chriſt as it was with Abijah, againſt whom Jeroboam prevailed, becauſe he was young and tender-hearted, and could not withſtand them. His *incapacity* and *weakneſs* gave the watchful enemy an advantage over him. I ſay, it is not ſo with Chriſt, he is at God's right-hand. And all the power of God ſtands ready bent to ſtrike through his enemies, as it is Pſal. cx. 5.

Sixthly, Chriſt's ſitting in heaven notes to us the great and wonderful change that is made upon the ſtate and condition of Chriſt, ſince his aſcenſion into heaven. Ah, it is far otherwiſe with him now, than it was in the days of his humiliation here on earth. *Quantum mutatus ab illo!* Oh, what a wonderful change hath heaven made upon him! It were good (as a *Worthy of ours ſpeaks) to compare in our thoughts the abaſement of Chriſt, and his exaltation together; as it were in columns, one over againſt the other. He was born in a ſtable, but now he reigns in his royal palace. Then he had a *manger* for his cradle, but now he ſits on a chair of ſtate. Then oxen and aſſes were his companions, now thouſands of ſaints, and ten thouſands of angels miniſter round about his throne. Then in contempt, they called him the *Carpenter's ſon*, now he obtains a more excellent name than *angels*. Then he was led away into the wilderneſs to be tempted of the devil, now it is proclaimed before him, "let all the angels of God worſhip him." Then he had not a place to lay his head on, now he is exalted to be heir of all things. In his ſtate of humiliation, "he endured the contradiction of ſinners;" in his ſtate of exaltation, "he is adored and admired by ſaints and angels." Then "he had no form or comelineſs; and when we ſaw him, there "was no beauty, why we ſhould deſire him:" Now the beauty of his countenance ſhall ſend forth ſuch glorious beams, as ſhall dazzle the eyes of all the celeſtial inhabitants round about him, &c.

O what a change is this! Here he ſweated, but there he ſits. Here he groaned, but there he triumphs. Here he lay upon the ground, there he ſits in the throne of glory. When he came to heaven, his Father did as it were thus beſpeak him.

My dear Son, *what an hard travail haſt thou had of it? What a world of woe haſt thou paſſed through, in the ſtrength of thy love to me and mine elect? Thou haſt been hungry, thirſty, weary, ſcourged, crucified, and reproached: Ah, what bad uſage haſt thou had in the ungrateful world! Not a day's reſt for comfort ſince thou wenteſt out from me; but now thy ſuffering days are accompliſhed; now thy reſt is come,*

* Mr T. Caſe, Pulpit, part 3. p. 21.

Digitized by Google

reſt for evermore. Henceforth ſit at my right-hand. Henceforth thou ſhalt groan, weep, or bleed no more. Sit thou at my right-hand.

Seventhly, Chriſt's ſitting at God's right-hand, *implies the advancement of believers to the higheſt honour:* For this ſeſſion of Chriſt's reſpects them, and there he ſits as our repreſentative, in which regard we are made to ſit with him in heavenly places, as the apoſtle ſpeaks, Eph. ii. 6. How ſecure may we be (ſaith Tertullian) who do now already poſſeſs the kingdom? meaning in our Head, Chriſt. This (ſaith another) is all my hope, and all my confidence, namely, that we have a proportion in that fleſh and blood of Chriſt, which is ſo exalted, and therefore where he reigns, we ſhall reign; where our fleſh is glorified, we ſhall be glorified. Surely, it is matter of exceeding joy to believe that Chriſt our Head, our fleſh, and blood, is in all this glory at his Father's right-hand. *Thus we have opened the ſenſe and importance of Chriſt's ſitting at his Father's right hand.* Hence we infer,

Inference 1. Is this ſo great an honour to Chriſt, to ſit enthroned at God's right hand? *What honour then is reſerved in heaven for thoſe that are faithful to Chriſt, now on the earth?* Chriſt prayed, and his prayer was heard, John xvii. 24. "That we may be with "him to behold the glory that God hath given him; and what heart can conceive the felicity of ſuch a ſight? It made Stephen's face ſhine as the face of an angel, when he had but a glimpſe of Chriſt at his Father's right-hand. "Thine eyes ſhall ſee the king "in his beauty," Iſa. xxxiii. 17. which reſpected Hezekiah in the *type*, *Chriſt* in the *truth*. But this is not all, though this be much, to be ſpectators of Chriſt in his throne of glory; we ſhall not only ſee him in his throne, but alſo ſit with him enthroned in glory. To behold him is much, but to ſit with him is more. I remember it was the ſaying of a heavenly Chriſtian, now with Chriſt, *I would far rather look but through the hole of Chriſt's door, to ſee but one half of his faireſt and moſt comely face, [for he looks like heaven] ſuppoſe I ſhould never win to ſee his excellency and glory to the full; than to enjoy the flower, the bloom, and chiefeſt excellency of the glory and riches of ten worlds.* And you know how the Queen of the South fainted at the ſight of Solomon in his glory. But this ſight you ſhall have of Chriſt, will change you into his likeneſs. "We ſhall be like "him (ſaith the apoſtle) for we ſhall ſee him as he is," 1 John iii. 2. He will place us as it were in his own throne with him. So runs the promiſe, Rev. iii. 21. "To him that overcometh, I will grant to ſit with me in my throne; even as I alſo overcame, and "am ſet down with my Father in his throne;" and ſo 2 Tim. ii. 12. "If we ſuffer with him, we ſhall alſo reign with him." The Father ſet Chriſt on his right-hand, and Chriſt will ſet the ſaints on his right hand. So you know the ſheep are placed by the an-

Digitized by Google

gels at the great day, Mat. xxv. and ſo the church, under the figure of the daughter of Egypt, whom Solomon married, is placed "on the king's right hand, in gold of Ophir," Pſal. xlv. This honour have all the ſaints. O amazing love! What, we ſet on thrones, while as good as we by nature howl in flames! O what manner of love is this! Theſe expreſſions indeed do not intend that the ſaints ſhall be ſet in higher glory than Chriſt; or that they ſhall have a parity of glory with Chriſt, for in all things he muſt have the pre-eminence: But they note the great honour that Chriſt will put upon the ſaints; as alſo, that his glory ſhall be their glory in heaven. "As the glory of the huſband re-"dounds to the wife; *and again, their glory will be his glory, 2 Theſ. i. 10. and ſo it will be a ſociat glory. O, it is admirable to think, whither free grace hath already mounted up poor duſt and aſhes!

To think how nearly related now to this royal, princely Jeſus! But how much higher are the deſigns of grace, that are not yet come to their parturient fulneſs, they look beyond all this that we now know! "Now are we the ſons of God, but it doth not yet ap-"pear what we ſhall be," 1 John iii. 2. Ah what reaſon have you to honour Chriſt on earth, who is preparing ſuch honours for you in heaven.

Infer. 2. *Is Chriſt Jeſus thus enthroned in heaven, then how impoſſible is it, that ever his intereſt ſhould miſcarry or ſink on earth?* The church hath many ſubtle and potent enemies. True, but as Haman could not prevail againſt the Jews, whilſt Eſther their friend ſpake for them to the king, no more can they, whilſt our Jeſus ſits at his, and our Father's right-hand. Will he ſuffer his enemies that are under his feet, to riſe up and pull out his eyes, think you? Surely they that touch his people, touch the very apple "of his eye," Zech. ii. 8. "He muſt reign till his enemies are "put under his feet," 1 Cor. xv. 25. The enemy under his feet, ſhall not deſtroy the children in his arms. He ſits in heaven on purpoſe to manage all to the advantage of his church, Eph. i. 22. Are our enemies powerful; lo our King *ſits on the right-hand of power.* Are they ſubtle and deep in their contrivance; He that ſits on the throne, overlooks all they do. Heaven overlooks hell. "He that ſits in heaven beholds," and derides their attempts, Pſal. ii. 4. He may permit his enemies to ſtraiten them in one place, but it ſhall be for their enlargement in another. For it is with the church, as it is with the ſea; what it loſes in one place, it gets it another; and ſo really loſes nothing. He

* *Uxor ſplendeſcit in radiis mariti.*

Digitized by Google

may suffer them also to distress us in outwards, but shall be recompensed with inward and better mercies; and so we shall lose nothing by that. A footstool you know is useful to him that treads on it, and serves to lift him up higher; so shall Christ's enemies be to him and his, albeit they think not so. What singular benefits the oppositions of his enemies, occasion to his people; I have * elsewhere discovered, to which I may refer my reader; and pass to

Inf. 3. Is Christ set down on the right-hand of the Majesty in heaven? *O with what awful reverence should we approach him in the duties of his worship!* Away with light and low thoughts of Christ. Away with formal, irreverent, and careless frames in praying, hearing, receiving, yea, in conferring and speaking of Christ. Away with all deadness, and drowsiness in duties; for he is a *great King* with whom you have to do. A King, to whom the kings of the earth are but as little bits of clay. Lo, the angels cover their faces in his presence. He is an adorable Majesty.

When John had a vision of this enthroned King, about sixty years after his ascension; such was the over-powering glory of Christ, *as the sun when it shineth in its strength*, that when he saw him, he fell at his feet as dead, and died it is like he had, if Christ had not laid his hand on him, and said, "Fear not, I am "the first and the last; I am he that liveth, and was dead, and "behold I am alive for evermore," Rev. i. 17, 18. When he appeared to Saul in the way to Damascus, it was in glory above the glory of the sun, which overpowered him also, and laid him as one dead upon the ground.

O that you did but know what a glorious Lord you worship and serve. Who makes the very *place of his feet glorious*, wherever he comes. Surely *He is greatly to be feared in the assembly of his saints, and to be had in reverence of all that are round about him.* There is indeed a παρρησια boldness or free liberty of speech allowed to the saints, Eph. iii. 12. But no rudeness or irreverence. We may indeed come, as the children of a king come to the father, who is both their awful sovereign, and tender father; which double relation causes a due mixture of love, and reverence in their hearts, when they come before him. You may be *free*, but not *rude*, in his presence. Though he be your Father, Brother, Friend; yet the distance betwixt him and you is *infinite.*

Inference 4. *If Christ be so gloriously advanced in the highest throne*†, *then none need to reckon themselves dishonoured, by suffering*

* A Saint indeed.

† It is no disgrace for us to suffer what Christ suffered, nor is it any glory for you to do what Judas did. *Hieronym.*

Digitized by Google

*the vileſt things for his ſake**. The very chains and ſufferings of Chriſt have glory in them. Hence Moſes "eſteemed the very "reproaches of Chriſt greater riches than the treaſures of Egypt," Heb. xi. 26. He ſaw an excellency in the very worſt things of Chriſt, his reproaches and ſufferings, as made him leap out of his honours, and riches into them. He did not, (as one ſaith) only *endure the reproaches of Chriſt*, but counted them *treaſures*. To be reckoned among his honours and things of value. So Thuanus reports of Ludovicus Marſacus, a noble knight of France, when he was led with other martyrs, that were bound with cords, to execution; and he for his dignity was not bound, he cried, give me my chain too, let me be a knight of the ſame order†. Diſgrace itſelf is honourable, when it is endured for the *Lord of Glory*. And ſurely there is (as one phraſeth it) a little paradiſe, a young heaven, in ſufferings for Chriſt. If there were nothing elſe in it, but that they are endured on his account, it would richly reward all we can endure for him; but if we conſider how exceeding kind Chriſt is to them, that count it their glory to be abaſed for him; that though he be always kind to his people, (yet if we may ſo ſpeak) he overcometh himſelf in kindneſs, when they ſuffer for him; it would make men in love with his reproaches.

Inf. 5. *If Chriſt ſat not down to reſt in heaven, till he had finiſhed his work on earth; then it is in vain for us to think of reſt, till we have finiſhed our work, as Chriſt alſo did his.*

How willing are we to find reſt here! To dream of that, which Chriſt never found in this world, nor any ever found before us. O think not of reſting, till you have done working and done ſinning. Your life and your labours muſt end together. "Write "(ſaith the Spirit) bleſſed are the dead that die in the Lord, for "they reſt from their labours," Rev. xiv. 13. Here you muſt have the *ſweat*, and there the *ſweet*. It is too much to have two heavens. Here you muſt be content to dwell in the *tents of Kedar*; hereafter you ſhall be *within the curtains of Solomon*. Heaven is the place of which it may be truly ſaid, that *there the weary be at reſt*. O think not of ſitting down on this ſide heaven. There are four things will keep the ſaints from ſitting down on earth to reſt, viz. grace, corruption, devils and wicked men.

Firſt, *Grace* will not ſuffer you to reſt here. Its tendencies are beyond this world. It will be looking and longing for the bleſſed hope. A gracious perſon takes himſelf for a pilgrim, ſeeking a better country, and is always ſuſpicious of danger in every place and ſtate. It is ſtill beating up the ſluggiſh heart with ſuch lan-

* Dr Manton on Jam. p. 228.

† *Cur et non me quoque torque donas? Et inſignis hujus ordinis militem creas?* Thuan. Hiſt.

Digitized by Google

guage as that, Mic. ii. 10. "Ariſe, depart, this is not thy reſt, "for it is polluted." Its further tendencies and continual jealouſies, will keep you from ſitting long ſtill in this world.

Secondly, Your *corruptions* will keep you from reſt here. They will continually exerciſe your ſpirits, and keep you upon your watch. Saints have their hands filled with work by their own hearts every day. Sometimes to prevent ſin; and ſometimes to lament it. And always to watch and fear, to mortify and kill it. Sin will not long ſuffer you to be quiet, Rom. vii. 21, 22, 23, 24. And if a bad heart will not break your reſt here, then,

Thirdly, There is a buſy devil will do it. He will find you work enough with his temptations and ſuggeſtions, and except you can ſleep quietly in his arms as the wicked do, there is no reſt to be expected. "Your adverſary, the devil, goeth about as a roar-"ing lion, ſeeking whom he may devour; whom reſiſt," 1 Pet. v. 8.

Fourthly, Nor will his ſervants and inſtruments let you be quiet on this ſide heaven. * Their very name ſpeaks their turbulent diſpoſition. "My ſoul (ſaith the holy man) is among lions, and "I lie even among them that are ſet on fire, even the ſons of "men, whoſe teeth are ſpears and arrows," Pſal. lvii. 4. Well then, be content to enter into your reſt, as Chriſt did into his. He ſweat, then ſat, and ſo muſt you.

SERMON XLII.

CHRIST's Advent to Judgment, being the fourth and laſt Degree of his Exaltation, illuſtrated and improved.

ACTS x. 42.

And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to teſtify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead.

CHRIST enthroned in the higheſt glory in heaven is there to abide for the effectual and ſucceſsful government, both of the world, and of the church, until the number given him by the Father, before the world was, and purchaſed by the blood of the croſs, be gathered in; and then cometh the judgment of the great day, which will perfectly ſeparate the precious from the vile; put the redeemed in full poſſeſſion of the purchaſe of his blood in hea-

* רשע *Inquietum eſſe. Turbulentus.*

Digitized by Google

ven, and "then ſhall he deliver up the kingdom to his Father, "that God may be all in all."

This laſt act of Chriſt, namely, his judging the world, is a ſpecial part of his exaltation and honour beſtowed upon him, "because he is the Son of man," John v. 27. In that day ſhall his glory, as King, and abſolute Lord, ſhine forth as the ſun when it ſhineth in its ſtrength. O what an honour will it be to the man Chriſt Jeſus, who ſtood arraigned and condemned at Pilate's bar, to ſit upon the great white throne, ſurrounded with thouſands, and ten thouſands of angels! men and devils waiting upon him to receive the final ſentence from his mouth. In this will the glory of Chriſt's ſovereignty and power be eminently and illuſtriouſly diſplayed before angels and men*. And this is that great truth which he commanded to be preached and teſtified to the people, namely, that it is "he which is ordained of God to be the Judge "of quick and dead."

Wherein we have four things to be diſtinctly conſidered, viz. The ſubject, object, fountain and truth of the ſupreme judiciary authority.

Firſt, The ſubject of it, Chriſt, it is he that is ordained to be Judge. Judgment is the act of the whole undivided Trinity. The Father and Spirit judge, as well as Chriſt, in reſpect of authority and conſent, but it is the act of Chriſt, in reſpect of viſible management and execution, and ſo it is his *per proprietatem*, by *propriety*, the Father having conferred it upon him, as the Son of man; but not his *per appropriationem*, ſo as to exclude either the Father or Spirit from their authority, for they judge by him.

Secondly, The *object* of Chriſt's judiciary authority. The *quick and dead*, i. e. all that at his coming do live, or ever had lived. This is the *Object perſonal*. All men and women that ever ſprang from Adam; all the apoſtate ſpirits that fell from heaven, and are reſerved in chains to the judgment of this great day. And in this perſonal object, is included the *real object*, viz. all the actions, both ſecret and open, that ever they did, 2 Cor. v. 5. Rom. ii. 16.

Thirdly, The *Fountain* of this delegated authority, which is God the Father; for he hath ordained Chriſt to be the Judge. "He "is appointed†," as the Son of man, to this honourable office and work. The word notes, a firm eſtabliſhment of Chriſt in that office by his Father. He is now, by right of redemption, Lord and King. He enacts laws for government, then he comes to judge of men's obedience and diſobedience to his laws.

* To the royal dignity doth belong that power or authority by which Chriſt is made the Judge of all men and angels. *Ameſ. Med.* p. 117.

† Ὡρισμένος. *Definitus ſeu conſtitutus.*

Digitized by Google

Fourthly, and laſtly, Here is the infallible truth, or unqueſtionable certainty of all this: "He gave us commandment to preach "and teſtify it to the people." We had it in charge from his own mouth; and dare not hide it. Hence the point of doctrine is plainly this,

Doct. *That our Lord Jeſus Chriſt is ordained by God the Father to be the Judge of quick and dead.*

This truth ſtands upon the firm baſis of ſcripture authority. You have it from his own hand, John v. 22. "The Father judg-"eth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son," viz. in the ſenſe before given. And ſo the apoſtle, Acts xvii. 31. "He hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world "in righteouſneſs, by the man whom he hath ordained; whereof "he hath given aſſurance," &c. And again; Rom. ii. 16. "In "the day when God ſhall judge the ſecrets of men by Jeſus "Chriſt." Three things will be opened here. *Firſt*, The certainty of a judgment to come. *Secondly*, The quality and nature of it. *Thirdly*, That it is a ſpecial part of Chriſt's exaltation to be appointed Judge in this day.

Firſt, The certainty of a judgment. This is a truth of firmer eſtabliſhment than heaven and earth. It is no deviſed fable, no cunning artifice to keep the world in awe! but a thing as confeſſedly true as it is awfully ſolemn. For,

The certainly of a judgment.

Firſt, As the ſcriptures aforementioned (with theſe, 2 Cor. v. 10. Eccleſ. xii. 14. Matt. xii. 36. and many other, the true and faithful ſayings of God) do very plainly reveal it; ſo the juſtice and righteouſneſs of God require it ſhould be ſo. For the Judge of all the earth will do right, Gen. xviii. 25. Now righteouſneſs itſelf requires that a difference be made betwixt the righteous and the wicked: "Say ye to the righteous, it ſhall be well with him; "woe to the wicked, it ſhall be ill with him," Iſa. iii. 10. But no ſuch diſtinction is generally and fully made betwixt one another in this world. Yea, rather the wicked proſper, and the righteous periſh, "There is a juſt man that periſheth in his "righteouſneſs, and there is a wicked man that prolongeth his "life in his wickedneſs, Eccleſ. vii. 15. Yea, not only in, but for his righteouſneſs, as it may be fairly rendered.

Here the "wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous "than himſelf," Hab. i. 13. As the fiſhes of the ſea, where the great and ſtrong ſwallow up the ſmall and weak. And even in courts of judicature, where the innocent might expect relief; there they often meet with the worſt oppreſſions. How fairly and

Digitized by Google

juſtly therefore doth the wiſe man infer a judgment to come from this conſideration, Eccleſ. iii. 16, 17. "I ſaw under the ſun the "place of judgment, that wickedneſs was there, and the place of "righteouſneſs, that iniquity was there; I ſaid in my heart, God "ſhall judge the righteous and the wicked; for there is a time "there for every purpoſe, and for every work," *q. d.* the judgment to come, is the only relief and ſupport left to poor innocents, to quiet and comfort themſelves withal*. To the ſame purpoſe alſo is that, Jam. v. 6, 7. "Ye have condemned and killed the "juſt; and he doth not reſiſt you; be patient, therefore, brethren, "unto the coming of the Lord." It is confeſſed, that ſometimes, God vindicates his providence againſt the Atheiſm of the world, by particular ſtrokes upon the wicked; but this is but rare. And as the Father well obſerves, "† if no ſin were puniſhed here, no "providence would be believed; again, if every ſin were openly "puniſhed here, no judgment hereafter could be expected." Beſides,

Secondly, Man is a reaſonable being, and every reaſonable being, is an accountable being. He is a ſubject capable of moral government. His actions have a relation to a law. He is ſwayed by rewards and puniſhments. He acts by counſel, and therefore of his actions, he muſt expect to give an account, as it is Rom. xiv. 12. "So then every one of us, ſhall give an account of himſelf to "God." Eſpecially if we add, that all the gifts of body, mind, eſtate, time, &c. are ſo many talents, concredited and betruſted to him by God, and every one of us hath one talent at leaſt; therefore a time to render an account for all theſe talents will come, Matth. xxv. 14, 15. We are but ſtewards, and ſtewards muſt give an account, in order whereto, there muſt be a great *audit* day.

Thirdly, And what need we ſeek evidence of this truth, further than our own conſcience? Lo, it is a truth engraven legibly upon every man's own breaſt. Every one hath a kind of little tribunal, or privy ſeſſions in his own conſcience, which both accuſes and excuſes for good and evil, which it could never do, were there not a future judgment, of which it is now conſcious to itſelf. In this court, records are now kept of all we do, even of our ſecret actions and thoughts, which never yet took air; but of no judg-

* In conſidering ſo great injuſtice, I have betaken myſelf to the judgment of God, who will declare who are guilty. *Druſius.* I have applied this remedy to this evil. *Merc.* I have comforted myſelf againſt this injuſtice, with the thought that God judgeth all. *Geirus.*

† *Si nullum peccatum manifeſta plecteretur pœna; nullam eſſe divinam providentiam crederetur. Rurſum, ſi omne peccatum aperte puniretur, nullum fore judicium crederetur.*—Aug.

Digitized by Google

ment, what need of records? Nor let any imagine, that this may be but the fruit of education and diſcourſe. We have heard of ſuch things, and ſo are ſcared by them. For if ſo, how comes it to obtain ſo univerſally? Who could be the author of ſuch a common deception?

Reader, bethink thyſelf a little; if thou haſt a mind (as * one ſaith) to impoſe a lie upon all the world, what courſe wouldſt thou take? How wouldſt thou lay the deſign? Or why doſt thou in this caſe imagine what thou knoweſt not how to imagine? It is evident that the very conſciences of the Heathens, have theſe offices of accuſing and excuſing, Rom. ii. 15. And it is hard to imagine, (as an ingenious author † ſpeaks) that a general cheat ſhould bow down the backs of all mankind, and induce ſo many doubts and fears, and troubles, amongſt them; and give an interruption to the whole courſe of their corrupt living, and that there ſhould be no account of it? And therefore it is undoubted that ſuch a day will come. But I ſhall rather chuſe, in the

Second Place, to open the nature and manner of this judgment, than to ſpend more time in proving a truth, that cannot be denied without violence offered to a man's own light. If then the queſtion be, What manner of judgment will this be? I anſwer,

The quality of the judgment.

Firſt, It will be a great and awful day. It is called the "judg- "ment of the great day," Jude 6. Three things will make it ſo, the manner of Chriſt's coming; the work he comes about; and the iſſues, or events of that work. The manner of Chriſt's coming, will be awfully ſolemn, "For the Lord himſelf ſhall deſ- "cend from heaven with a ſhout, with the voice of the arch- "angel, with the trump of God; and the dead in Chriſt ſhall "riſe firſt. Then we which are alive and remain, ſhall be caught "up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the "air," &c. 1 Theſſ. iv. 16, 17. Here Chriſt breaks out of heaven, with the ſhouts of angels, εν κελευσματι, it ſignifies ſuch a ſhout (‡ſaith one) as is to be heard among ſeamen, when after a long and dangerous voyage, they firſt deſcry land, crying aloud, with united voices, *a ſhore, a ſhore.* As the poet deſcribes the Italians, when they ſaw their native country, "lifting up their "voices, and making the heavens ring again with §Italy, Italy; or "as armies ſhout when the ſignal of battle is given." Above all which (as ſome expound it) ſhall the voice of the Archangel be diſ-

* Mr Howe's Bleſſedneſs of the Righteous, p. 343.
† Sir Charles Woolſely's Unreaſonableneſs of Atheiſm, p. 76.
‡ Caſe's Piſgah.
§ *Italiam, Italiam, læto clamore ſalutant.* Virgil. Æneid.

Digitized by Google

tinctly heard. And after this ſhout, *the trump of God* ſhall ſound. By this tremendous blaſt, ſinners will be affrighted out of their graves; but to the ſaints, it will carry no more terror, than the roaring of cannons, when armies of friends approach a beſieged city, for the relief of them that are within it. The dead being raiſed, they ſhall be gathered before the great throne on which Chriſt ſhall ſit in his glory; and there be divided exactly to the right and left-hand of Chriſt, by the angels. Here will be the greateſt aſſembly that ever met. Where Adam may ſee his numerous offspring, even as the ſand upon the ſea-ſhore, which no man can number. And never was there ſuch a perfect diviſion made, (how many diviſions ſoever have been in the world) none was ever like it. The ſaints in this great *Oecumenical aſſize* (as the author ſtiles it) ſhall meet the Lord in the air, and there the Judge ſhall ſit upon the throne, and all the ſaints ſhall be placed upon bright clouds, as on ſeats or ſcaffolds round about him; the wicked remaining below upon the earth, there to receive their final doom and ſentence.

Theſe preparatives will make it awful; and much more will the work itſelf, that Chriſt comes about, make it ſo. For it is "to "judge the ſecrets of men," Rom. ii. 16. To ſever the tares from the wheat; to make every man's whites and blacks appear; and according as they are found in that trial, to be ſentenced to their everlaſting and immutable ſtates. O what a ſolemn thing is this!

And no leſs will the execution of the ſentence on both parts make it a great and ſolemn day. The heart of man cannot conceive what impreſſions the voice of Chriſt, from the throne, will make, both upon believers, and unbelievers.

Imagine Chriſt upon his glorious throne, ſurrounded with myriads and legions of angels, his royal guard; a poor unbeliever trembling at the bar; an exact ſcrutiny made into his heart and life; the dreadful ſentence given; and then a cry; and then his delivering him over to the executioners of eternal vengeance, never, never, to ſee a glimpſe of hope or mercy any more.

Imagine Chriſt, like the general of an army, mentioning with honour, on the head of all the hoſts of heaven and earth, all the ſervices that the ſaints have done for him in this world: then ſententially juſtifying them by open proclamation; then mounting with him to the third heavens, and entering the gates of that city of God, in that noble train of ſaints and angels intermixed; and ſo for ever to be with the Lord. O what a great day muſt this be!

Secondly, As it will be an awful and ſolemn judgment, ſo it will

Digitized by Google

be a critical and exact judgment, every man will be weighed to his ounces and drachms. The name of the Judge is Καρδιογνώστης, the Searcher of hearts. The Judge hath eyes as flames of fire, which pierce to the dividing of the heart and reins. It is said, Matth. xii. 36. That men shall then "give an account of every idle "word that they shall speak." It is a day that will perfectly fan the world. No hypocrite can escape; Justice holds the ballances in an even hand: Christ will go to work so exactly, that some divines of good note think, the day of judgment will last as long as this day of the gospel's administration hath lasted, or shall last.

Thirdly, It will be an universal judgment, 2 Cor. v. 10. "We "must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ." And Rom. xiv. 12. "Every one of us shall give an account of himself "to God." Those that were under the law, "and those that "having no law, were a law to themselves," Rom. ii. 12. Those that had many talents, and he that had but one talent, must appear at this bar; those that were carried from the cradle to the grave, with him that stooped for age: the rich, and poor; the father, and the child; the master, and servant; the believer, and the unbeliever, must stand forth in that day. "I saw the dead, "both small and great, stand before God, and the books were "opened," Rev. xx. 12.

Fourthly, It will be a judgment full of convictive clearness. All things will be so sifted to bran, (as we say), that the sentence of Christ, both on saints and sinners, shall be applauded. "Right-"teous art thou, O Lord, because thou hast judged thus." His judgments will be as the light that goeth forth. So that those poor sinners whom he will condemn, shall be first αυτοκατακριτοι self-condemned. Their own consciences shall be forced to confess, that there is not one drop of injustice in all that sea of wrath, into which they are to be cast.

Fifthly, and lastly, It will be a supreme and final judgment, from which lies no appeal. For it is the sentence of the highest, and only Lord. "For as the ultimate resolution of faith is into the "word and truth of God, so the ultimate resolution of justice is "into the judgment of God*." This judgment is supreme and imperial. For Christ is the *only Potentate*, 1 Tim. vi. 5. and therefore the sentence once passed, its execution is infallible. And so you find it in that judicial process, Matth. xxv. ult. just after the sentence is pronounced by Christ, it is immediately added, "these "shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous in-"to life eternal." This is the judgment of the great day.

Thirdly, In the last place, I must inform you, that God, in or-

* *Ad Dei verbum fit ultima resolutio fidei, ad Dei tribunal ultima resolutio judicii.*

Digitized by Google

daining Christ to be the Judge, has very highly exalted him. This will be very much for his honour: for in this, Christ's royal dignity will be illustrated, beyond whatever it was since he took our nature, till that day; now he will appear in his glory. For;

That this judgment makes for Christ's honour.

First, This act of judging pertaining properly to the kingly office, Christ will be glorified as much in his kingly office, as he hath been in either of the other. We find but some few glimpses of the kingly office, breaking forth in this world; as, his riding with Hozannas into Jerusalem; his whipping the buyers and sellers out of the temple; his title upon the cross, &c. But these were but faint beams: Now that office will shine in its glory, as the sun in the midst of the heavens. For what were the Hozannas of little children, in the streets of Jerusalem, to the shouts and acclamations of thousands of angels, and ten thousands of saints? what was his whipping the prophane out of the temple, to his turning the wicked into hell, and sending his angels to gather out of his kingdom every thing that offendeth? what was a title written by his judge, and fixed on the ignominious tree, to the name that shall now be seen on his vesture, and on his thigh, *King of kings, and Lord of lords.*

Secondly, This will be a display of his glory in the highest, before the whole world. For there will be present at once, and together, all the inhabitants of heaven, and earth, and hell; angels must be there to attend and minister; those glittering courtiers of heaven must attend his person; so that heaven will, for a time, be left empty of all its inhabitants: men and devils must be there to be judged: and before this great assembly will Christ appear in royal Majesty. He will, (to allude to that text, Isa. xxiv. 23.) reign before his ancients gloriously. "For he will come to be glorified "in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe," 2 Thess. i. 10. The inhabitants of the three regions, heaven, earth and hell, shall then rejoice, or tremble before him, and acknowledge him to be supreme Lord and King.

Thirdly, This will roll away for ever the reproach of his death: for Pilate and the High-priest, that judged him at their bars, shall now stand quivering at his bar; with Herod that set him at nought, the soldiers and officers that traduced and abused him: there they that reviled him on the cross, wagging their heads, will stand, with trembling knees, before his throne. For "every "eye shall see him, and they also that pierced him," Rev. i. 7. O what a contemptible person was Christ in their eyes once? As a worm, and no man. Every vile wretch could freely tread and trample on him; but now such will be the brightness of his glory,

Digitized by Google

such the awful beams of majesty, that the wicked shall not stand in his presence, or "be able to rise up," (as that * word imports, Psal. i. 5.) "before him." So that this will be a full and universal vindication of the death of Christ, from all that contempt and ignominy that had attended it. We next improve it.

Inference 1. Is Jesus Christ ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead? *Great then is the security believers have, that they shall not be condemned in that day.* Who shall condemn, when Christ is Judge? If believers be condemned in judgment, Christ must give sentence against them; yea, and they must condemn themselves too. I say, Christ must give sentence, for that is the proper and peculiar office of Christ. And, to be sure, no sentence of condemnation shall in that day be given by Christ against them. For,

First, He died to save them, and he will never cross and overthrow the designs and ends of his own death. That cannot be imagined. Nay,

Secondly, They have been cleared and absolved already. And being once absolved by divine sentence, they can never be condemned afterward. For one divine sentence cannot cross and rescind another. He justified them here in this world by faith: Declared in his word, (which shall then be the rule of judgment, Rom. ii. 16.) that "there is no condemnation to them that are "in Christ," Rom. viii. 1. And surely he will not retract his own word, and give a sentence quite cross to his own statute-book, out of which he hath told us that they shall be judged. Moreover,

Thirdly, The far greatest part of them will have passed their particular judgment, long before that day, and being therein acquitted by God the Judge of all; and admitted into heaven upon the score and account of their justification; it cannot be imagined that Christ should now condemn them with the world. Nay,

Fourthly, He that judged them is their head, husband, friend, and brother; who loved them, and gave himself for them. O then, with what confidence may they go, even unto his throne? and say, with Job, "Though he try us as fire, we know we shall "come forth as gold." We know that we shall be justified. Especially, if we add, that they themselves shall be the assessors with Christ in that day. And, (as a judicious † author pertinently observes,) not a sentence shall pass without their votes. "So as that "they may by faith not only look upon themselves as already in "heaven, sitting with Christ, as a common person, in their right; "but they may look upon themselves as judges already. So that

* לא יקמו † Goodwin's Triumph, p. 146.

Digitized by Google

"if any sin should arise to accuse or condemn, yet it must be with "their votes. And what greater security can they have than this, "that they must condemn themselves, if they be condemned." No, it is not the business of that day to condemn, but to absolve and pronounce them pardoned and justified, according to the sentence of Acts iii. 19. and Mat. xii. 32. So that it must needs be a time of refreshing, (as all scriptures call it,) to the people of God. You that now believe, shall not come into condemnation, John v. 24. You that now judge yourselves shall not be condemned with the world, 1 Cor. xi. 31, 32.

Inf. 2. If Christ be ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead, *how miserable a case will Christless souls be in at that day!* They that are Christless now, will be speechless, helpless, and hopeless then. How will their hands hang down, and their knees knock together! O what pale faces, quivering lips, fainting hearts, and roaring consciences will be among them in that day! O dreadful day! O astonishing sight! to see the world in a dreadful conflagration, the elements melting, the stars falling, the earth trembling, the judgment set, the prisoners brought forth; O who shall endure this day, but those that by union with Christ are secured against the danger and dread of it! Let me demand of poor Christless souls, whom this day is like to take unawares,

First, Do you think it possible to avoid appearing, after that terrible citation is given to the world by the trump of God? Alas, how can you imagine it? is not the same power that revived your dust, able to bring you before the bar? There is a necessity that you must come forth, 2 Cor. v. 10. "We [must] all appear." It is not in the sinners choice, to obey the summons or not.

Secondly, If you must appear, are there no accusers, nor witnesses, that will appear against you and confront you in the court? What think you, was Satan so often a tempter to you here, and will he not be an accuser there? Yes, nothing surer; for that was the main design of all his temptations. What think you of your own consciences? are they not privy to your secret wickedness; do not they now whisper sometimes in your ears, what you care not to hear of? If they whisper now, they will thunder then, Rom. ii. 15, 16. Will not the Spirit accuse you, for resisting his motions and stifling thousands of his convictions? Will not your companions in sin accuse you? who drew, or were drawn by you to sin; Will not your teachers be your accusers? How many times have you made them complain, *Lord, they are iron and brass, they have made their faces harder than a rock; they refuse to return.* Will not your very relations be your accusers, to whom you have failed in all your relational duties? Yea, and every one whom you have tempted to sin, abused, defrauded, over-reached; all

Digitized by Google

theſe will be your accuſers. So that it is without diſpute, you will have accuſers enough to appear againſt you.

Thirdly, Being accuſed before Jeſus Chriſt, what will you plead for yourſelves: will you confeſs, or will you deny the charge. If you confeſs, what need more? "Out of thine own mouth will I "judge thee," ſaith Chriſt, Luke xix. 22. If you deny, and plead not guilty, thy Judge is the ſearcher of hearts, and knows all things. So that it will not at all help thee to make a lie thy laſt refuge. This will add to the guilt, but not cover it.

Fourthly, If no defence or plea be left thee, then what canſt thou imagine ſhould retard the ſentence? Why ſhould not Chriſt go on to that dreadful work? "Muſt not the Judge of all the "earth do right?" Gen. xviii. 25. Muſt not he render to every man according to his deeds? 2 Cor. v. 10. Yes, no queſtion but he will proceed to that ſentence, how terrible ſoever it be to you to think on it now, or hear it then.

Fifthly, To conclude, if ſentence be once given by Chriſt againſt thy ſoul, what in all the world canſt thou imagine ſhould hinder the execution? Will he alter the thing that is gone out of his mouth? No, Pſal. lxxxix. 34. Doſt thou hope he is more merciful and pitiful than ſo? Thou miſtakeſt, if you expecteſt mercy out of that way in which he diſpenſes it. There will be thouſands, and ten thouſands that will rejoice in, and magnify his mercy then; but they are ſuch as obey his call, repented, believed, and obtained union with his perſon here; but for unbelievers, it is againſt the ſettled law of Chriſt, and conſtitution of the goſpel, to ſhew mercy to the deſpiſers of it. But it may be, you think your tears, your cries, your pleadings with him, may move him; theſe indeed might have done ſomewhat in time, but they come out of ſeaſon now. Alas, too late. What the ſucceſs of ſuch pleas and cries will be, you may ſee, if you will but conſult two ſcriptures, Job xxvii. 8, 9. "What is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath "gained, when God taketh away his ſoul? Will God hear his "cry when trouble cometh upon him?" No: And Matt. vii. 22. "Many will ſay unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not "propheſied in thy name, and in thy name have caſt out devils, "and in thy name have done many wonderful works? And then "will I profeſs unto them, I never knew you; depart from me "ye that work iniquity."

And muſt it come to this diſmal iſſue with you indeed? God forbid it ſhould. Oh then,

Inf. 3. If Chriſt be appointed of God to be the Judge of all, *how are all concerned to ſecure their intereſt in him, and therein an eternity of happineſs to their own ſouls, by the work of regeneration?* Of all the buſineſs that men and women have in this world, there is none

Digitized by Google

so solemn, so necessary, and important as this. O my brethren, this is a work, able to drink up your spirits, while you do but think of the consequence of it.

Summon in then thy self-reflecting and considering powers: get alone, reader, and, forgetting all other things, ponder with thyself this deep, dear, eternal concernment of thine. Examine the state of thy own soul. Look into the scriptures, then into thine own heart, and then to heaven, saying, *Lord, let me not be deceived in so great a concernment to me as this.* O let not the trifles of time wipe off the impressions of death, judgment, and eternity from thy heart. O that long word [*Eternity,*] that it might be night and day with thee; that the awe of it may be still upon thy spirit. A gentlewoman of this nation, having spent the whole afternoon, and a great part of the evening at cards, in mirth and jollity, came home late at night, and finding her waiting gentlewoman reading, she looked over her shoulder upon the book, and said, Poor melancholy soul, why dost thou sit here poring so long upon thy book? That night she could not sleep, but lay sighing and weeping; her servant asked her once and again what ailed her; at last she burst out into tears, and said, Oh! it was one word that I cast my eye upon in thy book, that troubles me; there I saw that word *Eternity.* How happy were I, if I were provided for eternity! Sure it concerns us, seeing we look for such things, to be diligent that we may be found of him in peace. O let not that day come by surprizal upon you. Remember, that as death leaves, so judgment will find you.

Inf. 4. Is Jesus Christ appointed Judge of quick and dead, *then look to it,* all you that hope to be found of him in peace, *that you avoid those sins, and live in the daily practice of those duties, which the consideration of that day powerfully persuades you to avoid or practise.* For it not only presses to holiness *in actu primo,* in the being of it; but *in actu secundo,* in the daily exercise and practice of it. Do you indeed expect such a day? Oh, then,

First, See you be meek and patient under all injuries and abuses for Christ's sake. Avenge not yourselves, but leave it to the Lord, who will do it. Do not anticipate the work of God. "Be patient, my brethren, to the coming of the Lord," James v. 7, 8, 9.

Secondly, Be communicative, public-hearted Christians, studying and devising liberal things, for Christ's distressed members; and you shall have both an honourable remembrance of it, and a full reward of it in that day, Mat. xxv. 34, 35.

Thirdly, Be watchful, and sober, keep the golden bridle of moderation upon all your affections; and see that you be not overcharged with the cares and love of this present life, Luke xxi. 34,

Digitized by Google

35. Will you that your Lord come and find you in ſuch a poſture? "O let your moderation be known unto all, the Lord is at "hand," Phil. iv. 5.

Fourthly, Improve all your Maſter's talents diligently and carefully. Take heed of the napkin, Matt. xxv. 14, 18. Then muſt you make up your account for them all.

Fifthly, But, above all, be ſincere in your profeſſion. Let your hearts be found in God's ſtatutes, that you may never be aſhamed; for this day will be the day of manifeſtation of all hidden things. And nothing is ſo ſecret, but that day will reveal it, Luke xii. 1, 2, 3. "Beware of hypocriſy; for there is nothing covered, which "ſhall not be revealed; neither hid, that ſhall not be made "known."—Thus I have finiſhed, through divine aids, the whole doctrine of the impetration of redemption by Jeſus Chriſt; we ſhall wind up the whole in a general exhortation, and I have done.

The General Uſe.

The general uſe of the whole, preſſing to holineſs, which is the main ſcope of the doctrine of redemption.

And now, to cloſe up all, let me perſuade all thoſe for whom the dear Son of God came from the bleſſed boſom of the Father; aſſumed fleſh; brake, by the ſtrength of his own love, through all diſcouragements and impediments; laid down his own life a ranſom for their ſouls; for whom he lived, died, roſe, aſcended, and lives for ever in heaven to intercede; to live wholly to Chriſt, as Chriſt lived and died wholly for them.

O brethren, never was the Heathen world acquainted with ſuch arguments to deter them from ſin; never acquainted with ſuch motives to urge them to holineſs, as I ſhall this day acquaint you with. My requeſt is, to give up both your hearts and lives to glorify the Father, Son, and Spirit, whoſe you are, by the holineſs and heavenlineſs of them. Other things are expected from you than from other men. See that you turn not all this grace that hath ſounded in your ears into wantonneſs. Think not becauſe Chriſt hath done ſo much for you, you may ſit ſtill; much leſs indulge yourſelves in ſin, becauſe Chriſt hath offered up ſuch an excellent ſacrifice for the expiation of it. No, though Chriſt came to be a curſe, he did not come to be a cloak for your ſins. "If one died for all, then were all dead; that they that live, "ſhould not henceforth live to themſelves, but to him that died "for them," 2 Cor. v. 15. O keep your lives pure and clean. Do not make freſh work for the blood of Chriſt every day. "If "you live in the Spirit, ſee that you walk in the Spirit, Gal. v. 25.

Digitized by Google

i. e. (saith * Cornelius a Lapide very solidly) "Let us shape and "order our lives and actions according to the dictates, instinct, "and impulses of the Spirit, and of that grace of the Spirit put "within us and planted in our hearts, which tendeth to practical "holiness." O let the grace which is in your hearts, issue out into all your religious, civil, and natural actions. Let the faith that is in your hearts appear in your prayers; the obedience of your hearts in hearing; the meekness of your hearts in suffering; the mercifulness of your hearts in distributing; the truth and righteousness of your hearts in trading; the sobriety and temperance of your hearts in eating and drinking. These be the fruits of Christ's sufferings indeed, they are sweet fruits. Let grace refine, ennoble, and elevate all your actions; that you may say, "Truly our conver- "sation is in heaven." Let grace have the ordering of your tongues, and of your hands; the moulding of your whole conversation. Let not humility appear in some actions, and pride in others; holy seriousness in some companies, and vain frothiness in others. Suffer not the fountain of corruption to mingle with, or pollute the streams of grace. Write as exactly as you can after your copy, Christ. O let there not be (as † one well expresses it) here a line and there a blank; here a word, and there a blot. One word of God, and two of the world. Now a spiritual rapture, and then a fleshly frolic. This day an advance towards heaven, and to-morrow a slide back again towards hell. But *be you in the fear of the Lord all the day long.* Let there be a due proportion betwixt all the parts of your conversation. Approve yourselves the servants of Christ in all things. "By pureness, by knowledge, "by long-suffering, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the "word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righte- "ousness, on the right-hand, and on the left," 2 Cor. vi. 6. See then how accurately you walk.—Cut off occasion from them that desire occasion; and in well-doing commit yourselves to God, and commend religion to the world. That this is your great concernment and duty, I shall evidence to your consciences, by these following considerations. That of all persons in the world, the redeemed of the Lord are most obliged to be holy; most assisted for a life of holiness; and that God intends to make great use of their lives, both for the conviction and conversion of others.

Consider, *First*, God hath more obliged them to live pure and strict lives. I know the command obliges all men to it, even those that cast away the cords of the commands, and break Christ's

* *Secundum dictamen, instinctum, impulsum Spiritus eo gratiæ immisse, et inditæ nobis a Spiritu Sancto.*

† R. A. *Vindiciæ Pietatis.*

Digitized by Google

bonds asunder, are yet bound by them; and cannot plead a dispensation to live as they do. Yea, and it is not unusual for them to feel the obligations of the command upon their consciences, even when their impetuous lusts hurry them on to the violation of them; but there are special ties upon your souls, that oblige you to holiness more than others. Many special and peculiar engagements you are under. *First*, from *God*. *Secondly*, from *yourselves*. *Thirdly*, from your *brethren*. *Fourthly*, from your *enemies*.

First, God hath peculiarly obliged you to purity and strictness of life. Yea, every Person in the blessed Trinity hath cast his cord over your souls, to bind up your hearts and lives to the most strict and precise obedience of his commands.

Obligations from the Father. *The Father* hath obliged you, and that not only by the common tie of *creation*, which is yet of great efficacy in itself; for, is it reasonable that God should create and form so excellent a piece, and that it should be employed against him? That he should plant the tree, and another eat the fruit of it? But, besides this common engagement, he hath obliged you to holiness of life,

First, By his wise and merciful designs and counsels for your recovery and salvation by Jesus Christ. It was he that laid the corner-stone of your salvation with his own hands. The first motion sprang out of his breast. If God had not designed the Redeemer for you, the world had never seen him; he had never left that sweet Bosom for you. It was the act of the Father to give you to the Son to be redeemed, and then to give the Son to be a Redeemer to you. Both of them stupendous and astonishing acts of grace. And in both God acted as a most free Agent. When he gave you to Christ before the beginning of time, there was nothing out of himself that could in the least move him to it. When the Father, Son, and Spirit sat (as I may say) at the council-table, contriving and laying the design for the salvation of a few out of many of Adam's degenerate offspring, there was none came before him to speak one word for thee; but such was the divine Pleasure to insert thy name in that catalogue of the saved. Oh how much owest thou to the Lord for this! And what an engagement doth it leave upon thy soul to obey, please, and glorify him?

Secondly, By *his bountiful remunerations of your obedience, which have been wonderful.* What service didst thou ever perform for him, for which he hath not paid thee a thousand times more than it is worth? Didst thou ever seek him diligently, and not find him a bountiful rewarder; none seek him in vain, unless such only as seek him vainly, Heb. xi. 6. Didst thou ever give a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, and not receive a disciple's reward? Mat. x. 42. Hast thou not found inward peace and comfort flowing into thy soul, upon every piece of sincere obedi-

Digitized by Google

ence! Oh what a good master do saints serve? You that are remiss and unconstant in your obedience, you that are heartless and cold in duties; hear how your God expostulates with you, Jer. ii. 31. "Have I been a wilderness to Israel, or a land of darkness?" *q. d.* Have I been a hard Master to you? Have you any reason to complain of me? To whomsoever I have been straithanded, surely I have not been so to you. Are fruits of sin like fruits of obedience? Do you know where to find a better Master? Why then are you so shuffling and unconstant, so sluggish and remiss in my work? Surely God is not behind-hand with any of you. May you not say with David, Psal. cxix. 56. "This I had, "becausé I kept thy precepts." There are fruits in holiness, even present fruit. It is a high favour to be employed for God. Reward enough that he will accept any thing thou dost. But to return every duty thou presentest to him with such comforts, such quickenings, such inward and outward blessings into thy bosom, so that thou mayest open the treasury of thine own experiences, view the variety of encouragements and tokens of his love, at several times received in duties; and say, this I had, and that I had, by waiting on God, and serving him. Oh what an engagement is this upon thee to be ever abounding in the work of the Lord! Though thou must not work for *wages*; yet God will not let thy work go unrewarded. For *he is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love.*

Thirdly, Your Father hath further obliged you to holiness and purity of life, *by signifying to you* (as he hath frequently done) *the great delight and pleasure he hath therein.* He hath told you, "that such as are upright in the way are his delight," Prov. xi. 20. That he would not have you "forget to do good, and to "communicate, for with such sacrifices he is well pleased," Heb. xiii. 16. You know you cannot "walk worthy of the Lord to all "pleasing, (except) ye be fruitful in every good word and work," Col. i. 10. And oh what a bond is this upon you to live holy lives! Can you please yourselves in displeasing your Father? If you have the hearts of children in you, sure you cannot. O you cannot grieve his Spirit by loose and careless walking, but you must grieve your own spirits too. How many times hath God pleased you, gratified and contented you, and will you not please and content him? This mercy you have asked of him, and he gave it, that mercy and you were not denied; in many things the Lord hath wonderfully condescended to please you, and now there is but one thing that he desires of you, and that most reasonable, yea, beneficial for you, as well as pleasing to him, Phil. i. 27. "Only let "your conversation be as becometh the gospel of Jesus Christ." This is the one thing, the great and main thing he expects from you in this world, and will not you do it? Can you expect he

Digitized by Google

ſhould gratify your deſires, when you make no more of grieving and diſpleaſing him? Well, if you know what will pleaſe God, and yet reſolve not to do it, but will rather pleaſe your fleſh, and gratify the devil than him; pray pull off your vizards, fall into your own rank among hypocrites; and appear as indeed you are.

Fourthly, The Father hath further obliged you to ſtrictneſs and purity of converſation, by his gracious promiſes made to ſuch as ſo walk. He hath promiſed to do great things for you, if you will but do this one thing for him. If you will "order your converſation "aright," Pſal. l. *ult.* He will be *your ſun and ſhield*, if you walk before him and be upright, Gen. xv. 1. "He will give grace and "glory, and no good thing will he withhold from him that walk-"eth uprightly, Pſal. lxxxiv. 11. And he promiſes no more to you than he hath made good to others, that have thus walked, and ſtands ready to perform to you alſo. If you look to enjoy the good of the promiſe, you are obliged by all your expectations and hopes to order your lives purely and uprightly. This hope will ſet you on work to purge your lives, as well as your hearts, from all pollutions, 2 Cor. vii. 1. "Having theſe promiſes, let us cleanſe "ourſelves from all filthineſs of fleſh and ſpirit, perfecting holi-"neſs in the fear of God."

Fifthly, Yea, *He hath yet more obliged you to ſtrict and holy lives, by his confidence in you, that you will thus walk and pleaſe him.* He expreſſeth himſelf in ſcripture, as one that dares truſt you with his glory, knowing that you will be tender of it, and dare do no otherwiſe. But if a man repoſe confidence in you, and truſt you with his concerns, it greatly obliges you to be faithful. What an engagement was that upon Abraham to walk uprightly, when God ſaid of him, Gen. xviii. 19. "I know him, that he will com-"mand his children, and his houſhould after him, and they ſhall "keep the way of the Lord," *q. d.* as for this wicked generation, whom I will ſpeedily conſume in my wrath, I know they regard not my laws, they will trample my commands under their feet, they care not how they provoke me, but I expect other things from Abraham, and I am confident he will not fail me. *I know him*, he is a man of another ſpirit, and what I promiſe myſelf from him, he will make good. And to the like purpoſe is that in Iſa. lxiii. 7. "I will mention the loving-kindneſs of the Lord, and the "praiſes of the Lord; according to all that the Lord hath beſtow-"ed on us, and the great goodneſs towards the houſe of Iſrael, "which he hath beſtowed on them, according to his mercies, "and according to the multitude of his loving-kindneſſes. For "he ſaid, Surely they are my people, children that will not lie, "(or fail me:) ſo he was their Saviour." Here you have an ample account of the endearing mercies of God to that people,

Digitized by Google

ver. 7. and the Lord's confident expectations of suitable returns from them, ver. 8. I said, i. e. (speaking after the manner of men in like cases) I made a full account, that after all these endearments and favours bestowed upon them, they would not offer to be disloyal and false to me. I have made them sure enough to myself, by so many bonds of love. Like to which is that expression, Zeph. iii. 7. "I said, surely thou wilt fear me, thou wilt re-"ceive instruction." Oh! how great are the expectations of God from such as you! I know Abraham, there is no doubt of him! And again, they are children that will not lie, i. e. they will not *fallere fidem datam*, break their covenant with me. Or they are my people that will not shrink, as Mr Coverdale well translates, *filii non negantes*, such as will be true to me, and answer their covenant-engagements. And again, surely thou wilt fear me, thou wilt receive instruction. And shall not all this engage you to God? What! Neither the ancient and bountiful love of God, in contriving your redemption from eternity, nor the bounty of God, in rewarding all and every piece of service you have done for him? Nor yet the pleasure he takes in your obedience and upright walking; nor the encouraging promises he hath made thereto, nor yet his confident expectations of such a life from you, whom he hath so many ways obliged and endeared to himself? Will you forget your ancient friend, contemn his rewards, take no delight or care to please him? Slight his promises, and deceive and fail his expectations? "Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this! and be hor-"ribly afraid." Consider how God the Father hath fastened this five-fold cord upon your souls, and shew yourselves Christians; yea, to use the prophet's words, Isa. xlvi. 8. "Remember this, "and shew yourselves men."

Obligations from the Son.

Secondly, You are further engaged to this precise and holy life, by what the Son hath done for you; is not this pure and holy life the very aim, and next end of his death? Did he not shed his blood to "redeem you from your vain conversations?" 1 Pet. i. 18. Was not this the design of all his sufferings? "That being delivered out "of the hands of your enemies, you might serve him in righte-"ousness and holiness all the days of your life," Luke i. 74, 75. And is not the apostle's inference, 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. highly reasonable? "If one died for all, then were all dead, and that he "died for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live to "themselves, but to him that died for them." Did Christ only buy your persons, and not your services also? No, whoever hath thy time, thy strength, or any part of either, I can assure thee, Christian, that Christ hath paid for it, and thou givest away what is none of thine own to give. Every moment of thy time is his;

Digitized by Google

every talent, whether of grace or nature, is his; and doſt thou defraud him of his own? O how liberal are you of your precious words and hours, as if Chriſt had never made a purchaſe of them! O think of this, when thy life runs muddy and foul. When the fountain of corruption flows out at thy tongue, in idle frothy diſcourſes; or at thy hand, in ſinful unwarrantable actions? Doth this become the redeemed of the Lord? Did Chriſt come from the boſom of his Father for this? Did he groan, ſweat, bleed, endure the croſs, and lay down his life for this? Was he ſo well pleaſed with all his ſorrows and ſufferings, his pangs and agonies, upon the account of that ſatisfaction he ſhould have in ſeeing the travail of his ſoul? Iſa. liii. 11. as if he had ſaid, "Welcome "death, welcome agonies, welcome the bitter cup and heavy "burden; I cheerfully ſubmit to all this. Theſe are travailing "pangs indeed, but I ſhall ſee the beautiful birth at laſt. Theſe "throws and agonies ſhall bring forth many lovely children to "God; I ſhall have joy in them, and glory from them, to all "eternity. This blood of mine, theſe ſufferings of mine, ſhall "purchaſe to me the perſons, duties, ſervices, and obedience of "many thouſands that will love me, and honour me, ſerve me, "and obey me, with their ſouls and bodies which are mine." And doth not this engage you to look to your lives, and keep them pure? Is not every one of Chriſt's wounds a mouth open to plead for more holineſs, more ſervice, and more fruit from you? Oh! what will engage you if this will not? But,

Engagements from the Spirit.

Thirdly, This is not all; as a man when he weigheth a thing, caſteth in weight after weight, till the ſcales are counterpoiſed; ſo doth God caſt in engagement after engagement, and argument upon argument, till thy heart, Chriſtian, be weighed up and won to this heavenly life. And therefore, as Elihu ſaid to Job, chap. xxxvi. 22. "Suffer me a little, and I will ſhew thee what I have "yet to ſpeak on God's behalf." Some arguments have already been urged on the behalf of the Father and Son, for purity and cleanneſs of life; and next I have ſomething to plead on the behalf of the Spirit. I plead now on his behalf, who hath ſo many times helped you to plead for yourſelves with God. He that hath ſo often refreſhed, quickened, and comforted you, he will be quenched, grieved, and diſpleaſed by an impure, looſe, and careleſs converſation; and what will you do then? Who ſhall comfort you when the Comforter is departed from you? When he that ſhould relieve your ſouls is far off? O grieve not the holy Spirit of God by which you are ſealed, to the day of redemption, Eph. iv. 30. There is nothing grieves him more than impure practices, for he is a holy Spirit. And look, as water damps and quenches

Digitized by Google

the fire, so doth sin quench the Spirit, 1 Thes. v. 19. Will you quench the warm affections and burning desires which he hath kindled in your bosoms? If you do, it is a question whether ever you may recover them again to your dying day. The Spirit hath a delicate sense. It is the most tender thing in the whole world. He feels the least touch of sin, and is grieved when thy corruptions within are stirred by temptations, and break out to the defiling of thy life; then is the holy Spirit of God, as it were, made sad and heavy within thee. As that word μη λυπειτε, Eph. iv. 30. may be rendered. For thereby thou resistest his motions, whereby in the way of a loving constraint he would lead and guide thee in the way of thy duty; yea, thou not only resistest his motions, but crossest his grand design, which is to purge and sanctify thee wholly, and build thee up more and more to the perfection of holiness. And when thou thus forsakest his conduct, and crossest his design in thy soul, then doth he usually withdraw as a man that is grieved by the unkindness of his friend. He draws in the beams of his evidencing and quickening grace, withholds all his divine cordials, and faith, as it were, to the unkind and disingenuous soul,

The Spirit's expostulation with careless Christians.

"Hast thou thus requited me, for all the favours and kindnesses thou hast received from me? Have I quickened thee, when thou wast dead in transgressions? Did I descend upon thee in the preaching of the gospel, and communicate life, even the life of God, to thee; leaving others in the state of the dead; Have I shed forth such rich influences of grace and comfort upon thee? Comforting thee in all thy troubles, helping thee in all thy duties; satisfying thee in all thy doubts and perplexities of soul; saving thee, and pulling thee back from so many destructive temptations and dangers? What had been thy condition, if I had not come unto thee? Could the world have converted thee without me? Could ministers, could angels, have done that for thee which I did? And when I had quickened thee, and made thee a living soul, what couldst thou have done, without my exciting and assisting grace? Couldst thou go on in the way of duty, if I had not led thee? How wouldst thou have waded through the deeps of spiritual troubles, if I had not borne thee up? Whither had the temptations of satan and thine own corruptions carried thee before this day, if I had not stood thy Friend, and come in for thy rescue in the time of need? Did I ever fail thee in thy extremities? Did I ever leave thee in thy dangers? Have I not been tender over thee, and faithful to thee? And now, for which of all these kindnesses, dost thou thus wrong and abuse me? Why hast thou wounded me thus by

Digitized by Google

" thy unkindneſs? Ah! thou haſt ill requited my love! And " now thou ſhalt eat the fruit of thy doings. Let thy light now " be darkneſs; thy ſongs turned into howlings; the joy of thine " heart, the light of thine eyes, the health of thy countenance, " even the face of thy God, and the joy of ſalvation, be hid from " thee."

This is the fruit of careleſs and looſe walking. To this ſad iſſue it will bring thee at laſt, and when it is come to this, thou ſhalt go to ordinances, and duties, and find no good in them; no life-quickening comfort there. When thy heart which was wont to be enlarged, and flowing, ſhall be clung up and dry; when thou ſhalt kneel down before the Lord, and cry, as Eliſha, when with the mantle of Elijah, he ſmote the water, " Where is the " Lord God of Elijah?" So thou, where is the God of prayer? Where is the God of duties? But there is no anſwer: When like Samſon, thou ſhalt go forth and ſhake thyſelf, as at other times; but thy ſtrength is gone; then tell me, what thou haſt done in reſiſting, quenching, and grieving the Holy Spirit of God by impure and offenſive practices? And thus you ſee what engagements lie upon you from the Spirit alſo to walk uprightly, and keep the iſſues of life pure. I could willingly have enlarged myſelf upon this laſt branch, but that * a judicious hand hath lately improved this argument, to which I ſhall refer the reader. Thus God hath obliged you to circumſpect and holy lives.

Secondly, You are under great engagements to keep your lives pure, even from yourſelves, as well as from your God. As God hath bound you to purity of converſation, ſo you have bound yourſelves. And there are ſeveral things in you, and done by you, which wonderfully increaſe, and ſtrengthen your obligations to practical holineſs.

Firſt, Your *clearer illumination* is a ſtrong bond upon your ſouls, Eph. v. 8. " Ye were ſometimes darkneſs but now ye are light in " the Lord; walk as children of the light." You cannot pretend, or plead ignorance of your duty. You ſtand convinced in your own conſciences before God, that this is your unqueſtionable duty. Chriſtians, will you not all yield to this? I know you readily yield. We live, indeed, in a contentious, diſputing age. In other things, our opinions are different. One Chriſtian is of this judgment, another of that; but doth he deſerve the name of a Chriſtian that dare once queſtion this truth? In this we all meet and cloſe in oneneſs of mind and judgment, *that it is our indiſputable duty to live pure, ſtrict, and clean lives.* " The grace of God, " which hath appeared to you, hath taught you this truth clearly,

* Mr Polewheel's treatiſe of quenching the Spirit.

Digitized by Google

" and convincingly," Tit. ii. 11, 12. " You have received how " you ought to walk, and to pleaſe God," 1 Theſ. iv. 1. Well then, this being yielded, the inference is plain and undeniable; that you cannot walk as others, in the vanity of their mind; but you muſt offer violence to your own light. You cannot ſuffer the corruptions of your hearts to break forth into practice, but you muſt ſlight, and put by the notices and rebukes of your own conſciences, Jam. iv. 17. " He that knoweth to do good, and doth it " not, to him it is ſin." Yea, ſin with a witneſs. Aggravated ſin. Sin of a deeper tincture than that of Heathens. Sin that ſadly waſtes and violates conſcience. Certainly whoever hath, you have no cloak for your ſin. Light and luſt ſtruggling together, great light, and ſtrong luſts: theſe make the ſoul a troubled ſea that cannot reſt. O but when maſterleſs luſts overbear conſcience, this impreſſes horror upon the ſoul. This brake David's heart, Pſal. li. 6. " Thou haſt put knowledge in my inner parts," q. d. Ah, Lord! I went againſt the rebukes of conſcience, to the commiſſion of this ſin. I had a watchful light ſet up within me. I knew it was ſin. My light endeavoured lovingly to reſtrain me, and I thurſt it aſide. Beſides, what pleaſure in ſin can you have? Indeed, ſuch as for want of light know not what they do, or ſuch, whoſe conſciences are ſeared, and paſt feeling; they may ſeek a little pleaſure (ſuch as it is) out of ſin: but what content or pleaſure can you have, ſo long as your light is ever breaking in upon you, and ſmiting you for what you do? This greatly increaſes your obligation to a preciſe, holy life. Again,

Secondly, You are profeſſors of holineſs. You have given in your names to Chriſt, to be his diſciples; and by this your engagements to a life of holineſs, are yet further ſtrengthened, 2 Tim. ii. 19. " Let every one that nameth the name of Chriſt, depart from ini- " quity." The name of Chriſt is called upon you, and it is a *worthy name*, Jam. ii. 7. It is called upon you, as the name of the huſband is called upon his wife, Iſa. iv. 1. " Let thy name be " called upon us." Or, as the name of a Father is called upon his child, Gen. xlviii. 16. " Let my name be called on them, and " the name of my fathers." Well then, you bear the name of Chriſt as his ſpouſe or children; and will you not live ſuitably to your name? Every place and relation, every title of honour and dignity hath its decorum and becomingneſs. O how will that worthy name of Chriſt be blaſphemed through you, if you adorn it not with becoming deportment? Better you had never profeſſed any thing, than to ſet yourſelves by your profeſſion in the eye and obſervation of the world; and then to pour contempt on Jeſus Chriſt, by your ſcandalous converſations, before the eyes of

Digitized by Google

the world, who will laugh at it. I remember it was a *memento* given to one of his name by Alexander, *recordare nominis Alexandri.* Remember (ſaid he) thy name Alexander, and do nothing unworthy of that name. O, that is a heavy charge, Rom. ii. 24. "Through you is the name of God blaſphemed among the Hea-"thens." Unhappy man that ever thou ſhouldſt be a reproach to Chriſt! The herd of wicked men are *ignota capita*, men of no note or obſervation. They may ſin, and ſin again; drink, ſwear, and tumble in all uncleanneſs; and it paſſes away ſilently; the world takes little notice of it. Their wicked actions make but little noiſe in the world; but the miſcarriages of profeſſors, are like a *blazing comet*, or an eclipſed ſun, which all men gaze at, and make their obſervations upon; oh then, what manner of perſons ought you to be, who bear the worthy name of Chriſt upon you!

Thirdly, But more than this, *You have obliged yourſelves to this life of holineſs by your own prayers.* How many times have you lifted up your hands to heaven, and cried with David, Pſal. cxix. 5. "O that my ways were directed to keep thy ſtatutes. Order my "ſteps in thy word, and let no iniquity have dominion over me," ver. 133. Were you in earneſt with God, when you thus prayed? Did you mean as you ſaid? Or did you only compliment with God? If your hearts and tongues agreed in this requeſt, doubtleſs it is as much your duty to endeavour, as to deſire thoſe mercies; and, if not, yet do all thoſe prayers ſtand on record before the Lord, and will be produced againſt you as witneſſes to condemn you, for your hypocriſy and vanity. How often alſo have you in your prayers lamented, and bewailed your careleſs and uneven walkings? You have ſaid with Ezra, chap. ix. 6. "O my God, I "am aſhamed and even bluſh to look up unto thee." And do not your confeſſions oblige you to greater circumſpection and care for time to come? Will you confeſs, and ſin? And ſin, and confeſs? Go to God and bewail your evils, and when you have bewailed them, return again to the commiſſion of them? God forbid you ſhould thus diſſemble with God, play with ſin, and dye your iniquities with a deeper tincture.

Fourthly, and laſtly, to add no more, *You have often reproved or cenſured others for their miſcarriages and falls, which adds to your own obligation, to walk accurately, and evenly.* Have you not often reproved your erring brethren? or at leaſt privately cenſured them, if not duly reproved them, (for to theſe left-handed blows of ſecret cenſurings, we are more apt, than to the fair and open ſtrokes of juſt and due reproofs) and will you practiſe the ſame things you criminate and cenſure others for? "Thou that teacheſt ano-"ther, (ſaith the apoſtle) teacheſt thou not thyſelf?" Rom. ii. 21.

Digitized by Google

So ſay I, thou that cenſureſt or rebukeſt another, condemneſt thou not thyſelf? Will your rebukes ever do good to others, whilſt you allow in yourſelves what you condemn in them? And as theſe reproofs, and cenſures can do them no good, ſo they do you much evil, by reaſon of them you are αυτοκαταχριτοι, ſelf-condemned perſons; and out of your own mouths God will judge you. For you need no other witneſs than yourſelves in this caſe. Your own tongues will fall upon you. Your cenſures and reproofs of others will leave you without plea or apology, if you look not to your lives with greater care. And yet will you be careleſs ſtill? Fear you not the diſpleaſure of God? Nor the wounding and diſquieting your own conſciences? Surely, theſe things are of no light value with you, if you be Chriſtians indeed.

Thirdly, You are yet further engaged to practical holineſs upon the account of your brethren, who are not a little concerned and intereſted therein. For if, through the neglect of your hearts, your lives be defiled and polluted, this will be thrown in their faces, and many innocent and upright ones both reproached and grieved upon your account. This miſchievous effect holy David earneſtly deprecated, Pſal. lxix. 5, 6. "O God, thou knoweſt "my fooliſhneſs, and my ſins are not hid from thee; let not them "that wait on thee, O Lord God of hoſts, be aſhamed for my "ſake. Let not them that ſeek thee, be confounded for my "ſake, O God of Iſrael," *q. d.* Lord, thou knoweſt what a weak and fooliſh creature I am. And how apt to miſcarry, if left to myſelf, and ſhould I, through my fooliſhneſs, act unbecoming a ſaint; how would this ſhame the faces, and ſadden the hearts of thy people! They will be as men confounded at the report of my fall. The fall of one Chriſtian is matter of trouble and ſhame to all the reſt; and, when they ſhall hear the ſad and unwelcome news of your ſcandalous miſcarriages, (which will certainly be the effect of a neglected heart and life) they will ſay as David concerning Saul and Jonathan, "Tell it not in Gath, publiſh it not in the ſtreets "of Aſkelon," *&c.* Or as Tamar concerning Amnon, "And "we, whither ſhall we cauſe our ſhame to go?" And for them, they ſhall be as fools in Iſrael. Thy looſe and careleſs life will cauſe them to eſtrange themſelves from thee, and look ſhy upon thee, as being aſhamed to own thee, and canſt thou bear that? will it not grieve and pierce your very hearts to ſee a cloud of ſtrangeneſs and trouble over the countenances of your brethren? To ſee yourſelves diſowned and lightly eſteemed by them? This very conſideration ſtruck a great favourite in the Perſian court to the very heart. * It was Uſtazanes, who had been governor to

* Sozomen. *lib.* 2. *cap.* 8.

Digitized by Google

Sapores in his minority. And this man for fear denied the Chriſtian faith, and complied with the idolatrous worſhip of the king. And one day (ſaith the hiſtorian) ſitting at the court-gate, he ſaw Simon, the aged archbiſhop of Seleucia, drawn along to priſon, for his conſtancy in the Chriſtian faith; and, though he durſt not openly own the Chriſtian faith he had ſo baſely denied, and confeſs himſelf a Chriſtian, yet he could not chuſe but riſe, and expreſs his reverence to this holy man, in a reſpective and honourable ſalutation; but the zealous good man frowned upon him, and turned away his face from him, as thinking ſuch an *apoſtate* unworthy of the leaſt reſpect from him. This preſently ſtruck Uſtazanes to the heart, and drew from him many tears and groans; and thus he reaſoned with himſelf: Simon will not own me, and can I think but that God will diſclaim me, when I appear before his tribunal? Simon will not ſpeak unto me, will not ſo much as look upon me, and can I look for ſo much as a good word or look from Jeſus Chriſt, whom I have ſo ſhamefully betrayed and denied? Hereupon he threw off his rich courtly robes, and put on mourning apparel, and profeſſed himſelf a Chriſtian, and died a martyr. O it is a piercing thing to an honeſt heart, to be caſt out of the favour of God's people. If you walk looſely, neither God nor his people will look kindly upon you.

Fourthly, and laſtly, *Your very enemies engage you to this pure and holy life upon a double ground.* You are obliged by them two ways, viz. as they are your *bold cenſurers*, and your *watchful obſervers*. They cenſure you as hypocrites, and will you give them ground and matter for ſuch a charge? They ſay, only your tongues are more holy than other men's, and ſhall they prove it from your practice? They alſo obſerve you diligently; lie at catch, and are highly gratified by your miſcarriages. If your lives be looſe and defiled, you will not only be a ſhame to your friends, but the ſong of your enemies. You will make mirth in hell; and gratify all the enemies of God. This is that they watch for. They are curious obſervers of your goings. And that which makes them triumph at your falls and miſcarriages, is not only that deep rooted enmity betwixt the two ſeeds, but becauſe all your miſcarriages and evils are ſo many abſolutions to their conſciences, and juſtifications (as they think) of their ways and practices. For look, as your ſtrictneſs and holineſs doth, as it were, caſt and condemn them, as Noah, Heb. xi. 7. by his practice, condemned the world, their conſciences fly in their faces, when they ſee your holy and pure converſations. It lays a damp upon them. It works upon their conſciences, and cauſes many ſmart reflections. So when you fall, you, as it were, abſolve their conſciences, looſe the bonds of con-

Digitized by Google

viction you had made fast upon them, and now there is matter of joy put before them.

Oh, say they, whatever these men talk, we see they are no better than we. They can do as we do. They can cozen and cheat for advantage. They can comply with any thing for their own ends; it is not conscience, as we once thought, but mere stomach and humour, that made them so precise. And oh! what a sad thing is this! hereby you shed soul-blood. You fasten the bonds of death upon their souls. You kill those convictions, which, for any thing you know, might have made way to their conversion. When you fall, you may rise again; but they may fall at your example, and never rise more. Never have a good opinion of the ways of God, or of his people any more. Upon this consideration, David begs of God, Psal. v. 8. "Lead me, O Lord, in thy righte-"ousness, because of mine enemies;" (or, as the Hebrew) *my observers, make thy way straight before my face.* And thus you see how your very enemies oblige you to this holy and pure conversation also.

Now put all this together, and see to what these particulars will amount. You have heard how God the Father hath engaged you to this purity of conversation, by his designment of your salvation; rewarded your obedience; his pleasure in it; his promises to it; and his great confidence in you, that you will thus walk before him. The Lord Jesus hath also engaged you thereunto by his death and sufferings, whereby you were redeemed from your vain conversations. The Spirit hath engaged you, by telling you plainly how much you will grieve and wrong him, resist and quench him, if you do not keep yourselves pure. Yea, you are obliged further, by yourselves; your clear illumination; your high profession; your many prayers and confessions; your many censures and reprehensions of others; do all strengthen your obligation to holiness. Yea, you are obliged further to this holy life, by the shame, grief, and trouble your loose walking will bring upon your friends; and the mirth it will make for, and mischief it will do to your enemies; who, thereby, may be made utterly to fall, where, it may be, you only have stumbled: who are justified and absolved, (as before you heard), by your miscarriages. And now, what think you of all this? Are you obliged or not, to this purity of life? Are all these bonds so tied, that you can get loose, and free yourselves at pleasure from them? If all these things are of no force with you, if none of these bonds can hold you, may it not be questioned, (notwithstanding your profession), whether any spiritual principle, any fear of God, or love to Christ, be in your souls or no? O, you could not play fast and loose with God; if so, you could not, as Samson, snap these bonds asunder at your pleasure.

Digitized by Google

Confid. 2. *Secondly*, As you are more obliged to keep the ſtreams of life pure than others are, ſo God hath given you greater aſſiſtances and advantages for it than others have. God hath not been wanting to any in helps and means. Even the Heathen, who are without the goſpel, will be yet ſpeechleſs and inexcuſable before God; but how much more will you be ſo? Who, beſides the light of nature, and the general light of the goſpel, have, *Firſt*, Such a principle put within you. *Secondly*, Such patterns ſet before you. *Thirdly*, Such an aſſiſtant ready to help you. *Fourthly*, So many ods to quicken you and prevent your wandering: if notwithſtanding all theſe helps, your life be ſtill unholy.

Firſt, Shall men of ſuch principles walk as others do? Shall we lament for you, as David once did for Saul, ſaying, "There the "ſhield of the mighty was vilely caſt away, the ſhield of Saul; "as though he had not been anointed with oil." There the honour of a Chriſtian was vilely caſt away, as though he had not been anointed with the Spirit? "You have received an unction from "the holy One, which teacheth you all things," 1 John ii. 20. another Spirit, far above that which is in other men, 1 Cor. ii. 12. And as this ſpirit which is in you, is fitted for this life of holineſs, "(for ye are his workmanſhip, created in Chriſt Jeſus to good "works," Eph. ii. 10.) ſo this holy ſpirit or principle, infuſed into your ſouls, hath ſuch a natural tendency to this holy life, that if you live not purely and ſtrictly, you muſt offer violence to your own principles and new nature. A twofold help this principle affords you for a life of holineſs.

1. *Firſt*, It pulls you back from ſin, as in Joſeph; "How can "I do this great wickedneſs, and ſin againſt God?" And it alſo inclines you powerfully to obedience. It is a curb to ſin, and a ſpur to holineſs. It is impoſſible for all others to live ſpiritually and heavenly, becauſe they have no new nature to incline them hereunto. And, methinks, it ſhould be hard for you to live carnally, and ſenſually; and therein croſs the very bent and tendency of the new creature, which is formed in you. How can you neglect prayer, as others do, whilſt the Spirit, by divine pulſations, is awaking and rouſing up your ſluggiſh hearts with ſuch inward motions, and whiſpers, as that, Pſal. xxvii. 8. "Seek my face." Yea, whilſt you feel, (during your omiſſions of duty), ſomething within that bemoans itſelf, and, as it were, cries for food, pains and gripes you, like an empty ſtomach, and will not let you be quiet, till it be relieved. How can you let out your hearts to the world, as other men do, when all that while your ſpirit is reſtleſs, and aches like a bone out of joint? And you can never be at eaſe, till you come back to God, and ſay, as Pſal. cxvi. "Return "to thy reſt, O my ſoul." Is it not hard, yea, naturally impoſ-

Digitized by Google

fible, to fix a ſtone, and make it abide in the fluid air? Doth not every creature, in a reſtleſs motion, tend to its proper centre, and deſire its own perfection? So doth this new creature alſo. You ſee how the rivers in their courſe will not be checked, but bear down all the obſtacles in their way, *et ſævior ab obice ibit*; a ſtop doth but make them rage the more, and run the ſwifter afterwards.

There is a central force in theſe natural motions, which cannot be ſtopped. And the like may you obſerve, in the motions of a renewed ſoul, John iv. 14. "It ſhall be in him as a well of water "ſpringing up." And is it not hard for you to keep it down, or turn its courſe? How hard did Jeremiah and David find that work? If you do not live holy lives, you muſt croſs your own new nature, and violate the law that is written in your own hearts, and engraven upon your own bowels. To this purpoſe a late * writer ſpeaks; Till you were converted, (ſaith he), the fleſh was predominant, and therefore it was impoſſible for you to live any other than a fleſhly life; for every thing will act according to its predominant principle. Should you not therefore live a ſpiritual life? Should not the law of God written in your hearts, be legible in your lives? O ſhould not your lives be according to the tendency of your hearts? Thus he: Doubtleſs this is no ſmall advantage to practical holineſs. But,

Secondly, Beſides this principle within, you have no ſmall aſſiſtance for the purity of life, by theſe excellent patterns before you. The path of holineſs is no untrodden path to you. Chriſt and his ſervants have beaten it before you. The life of Chriſt is your copy, and it is a fair copy indeed, without a blot. Oh! what an advantage is this, to draw all the lines of your actions, according to his example! This glorious, grand example is often preſſed upon you for imitation, Heb. xii. 2. *Looking to Jeſus*, he hath left you *an example, that ye ſhould tread in his ſteps*, 1 Pet. ii. 21. His life is a living rule to his people; and beſides Chriſt's example, (for you may ſay, who can live as Chriſt did? his example is quite above us) you have a *cloud of witneſſes*. A cloud for its directive uſe, and theſe men of like paſſions, temptations, and conſtitutions with you; who have gone before you in exemplary holineſs. The Holy Ghoſt (intending therein your ſpecial help and advantage) hath ſet many induſtrious pens to work, to write the lives of the ſaints, and preſerve for your uſe, their holy ſayings, and heavenly actions. He bids you "take them for an example," James v. 10. Oh! what excellent men are paſſed on before you! what renowned Worthies have led the way! Men, whoſe conver-

* Mr T. Mall's Exhortation to holy living.

Digitized by Google

fations were in heaven, whilſt they tabernacled on earth. Whilſt this lower world had their bodies, the world above had their hearts, and their affections. Their actions and their deſigns were all for heaven. Men that improved troubles and comforts; loſſes and gains; ſmiles and frowns, and all for heaven. Men that did extract heaven out of ſpirituals, out of temporals, out of all things; their hearts were full of heavenly meditations, their mouths of heavenly communications, and their practices of heavenly inclinations: O what ſingular help is this! Where they followed Chriſt, and kept the way, they are propounded for your imitation; and where any of them turned aſide, you have a mark ſet upon that action for your caution and prevention. Doth any ſtrange or unuſual trial befal you, in which you are ready to ſay with the church, Lam. i. 12. "Was there ever any ſorrow like unto my "ſorrow?" Here you may ſee "the ſame affliction accompliſh-"ed in your brethren," 1 Pet. v. 9. Here is a ſtore of good company to encourage you. Do the world and the devil endeavour to turn you from your duty, by loading it with ſhameful ſcoffs, or ſufferings? In this caſe you may look to Jeſus, who deſpiſed the ſhame; and to your brethren, "who counted it their honour to be "diſhonoured for the name of Chriſt*," as the original of the text, Acts v. 41. may be tranſlated. Is it a diſhonour to thee, to be ranked with Abraham, Moſes, David, and ſuch as were the glory of the ages they lived in? Art thou at any time under a faint fit of diſcouragement, and ready to deſpond under any burden? Oh, how mayeſt thou be animated by ſuch examples, when ſuch a qualm comes over thy heart? Some ſparks of their holy courage cannot chuſe but ſteal into thy breaſt, whilſt thou conſidereſt them. In them, God hath ſet before thee the poſſibility of overcoming all difficulties, thou ſeeſt men of the ſame mould, who had the ſame trials, diſcouragements and fears, that now thou haſt, and yet overcame all. How is thy unbelief checked, when thou ſayeſt, *Oh! I ſhall never reach the end*, I ſhall one day utterly periſh! Why doſt thou ſay ſo? Why may not ſuch a poor creature as thou art, be carried through as well as they? Had not they the ſame temptations and corruptions with you? Were they not all troubled with a naughty heart, an enſnaring world, and a buſy devil, as well as you? Alas! when they put on the divine, they did not put off the human nature; but complained, and feared, as you do; and yet were carried through all.

O what an advantage have you this way! They that firſt truſted in Chriſt, had not ſuch helps as you. You ſtand upon their ſhoulders. You have the benefit of their experiences. You that are

* Οτι υπερ τ̃ ονοματος αυτ̃ κατηξιωθησαν ατιμασθηναι.

Digitized by Google

fallen into the laſt times, have certainly the beſt helps to holineſs; and yet, will not you live ſtrictly and purely? Will you put on the name and profeſſion of Chriſtians, and yet be lofty in your ſpirits; earthly in your deſigns; neglective of duty; frothy in your communications? Pray, from which of all the ſaints did you learn to be proud? Did you learn that from Chriſt, or any of his? From which of his ſaints did you learn to be earthly and covetous, paſſionate or cenſorious, over-reaching and crafty? If you have read of any ſuch evils committed by them, have you not alſo read of their ſhame and ſorrow, their repentance and reformations? If you have found any ſuch blots in their lives, it was left there deſignedly to prevent the like in yours. O, what an help to holineſs is this!

Thirdly, And this is not all. You have not only a principle within you, and a pattern before you, but you have alſo an omnipotent aſſiſtant to help, and encourage you throughout your way. Are you feeble and infirm? and is every temptation, even the weakeſt, ſtrong enough to turn you out of the way of your duty? Lo, God hath ſent his Spirit to help your infirmities, Rom. viii. 26. No matter then how weak you are, how many and mighty your difficulties and temptations are, as long as you have ſuch an aſſiſtant to help you. Great is your advantage for a holy life this way alſo. For,

(1.) *Firſt*, When a temptation to ſin preſſes ſore upon you, he pleads with your conſciences within, whilſt Satan is tempting without. How often hath he brought ſuch ſcriptures to your remembrance, at the very opportunity, as have ſaved you out of the temptation? If you attend his voice, you may hear ſuch a voice within you, as that, Jer. xliv. 4. "O do not this abominable thing "which I hate!" What mighty ſtrivings were there in the heart of Spira, as himſelf relates? He heard, as it were, a voice within him, ſaying, *Do not write, Spira, do not write.* To this purpoſe is that promiſe, Iſa. xxx. 20, 21. "Thine eyes ſhall behold thy "teachers, and thine ears ſhall hear a word behind thee, ſaying, "This is the way, walk ye in it; when ye turn to the right-hand, "and when ye turn to the left." Here you have a two-fold help to holineſs, the out-ward teaching of the word, ver. 20. and the inward teachings of the Spirit, ver. 21. He ſhall ſay *this is the way*, when ye are turning aſide to the right-hand, or to the left. Alluding to a ſhepherd, ſaith one, who, driving his ſheep before him; whiſtles them in, when he ſees them ready to ſtray.

(2.) *Secondly*, When ye walk holily and cloſely with God in your duties, and the Spirit encourages you to go on, by thoſe inward comforts, ſealings, and joys, you have from him at ſuch times;

Digitized by Google

how often does he entertain your ſouls in public ordinances, in private duties, with his hidden Manna, with marrow and fatneſs, with incomparable and unſpeakable comforts, and all this to ſtrengthen you in your way, and encourage you to hold on?

(3.) *Thirdly*, When you are indiſpoſed for duties, and find your hearts empty and dry, he is ready to fill them, quicken and raiſe them; ſo that oftentimes the beginning and end of your prayers, hearing, or meditations, are as vaſtly different, as if one man had begun, and another ended the duty. O then, what aſſiſtances for a holy life have you! Others indeed are bound to reſiſt temptations, as well as you; but, alas! having no ſpecial aſſiſtance from the Spirit, what can they do? It may be, they reaſon with temptation a little while, and in their own ſtrength reſolve againſt it; but how eaſy a conqueſt doth Satan make, where no greater oppoſition is made to him than this? Others are bound to hear, meditate, and pray, as well as you; elſe the neglect of thoſe duties would not be their ſin: But, alas, what pitiful work do they make of it! being left to the hardneſs and vanity of their own hearts; when you ſpread your ſails, you have a gale, but they lie wind-bound, heart-bound, and can do nothing ſpiritually in a way of duty.

Fourthly, and laſtly, to mention no more, You have a further advantage to this holy life, by all the rods of God that are at any time upon you. I might ſhew you in many particulars, the advantages this way alſo, but I ſhall only preſent theſe three to your obſervation at this time.

Firſt, By theſe you are clogged, to prevent your ſtraying and wandering. Others may wander even as far as hell, and God will not ſpend a ſanctified rod upon them, to reduce or ſtop them; but ſaith, "Let them alone," Hoſ. iv. 17. But if you wander out of the way of holineſs, he will clog you with one trouble or other to keep you within bounds, 2 Cor. xii. 7. "Leſt I ſhould be lifted "up, a thorn in the fleſh, a meſſenger of Satan, was ſent to "buffet me." So David, Pſal. cxix. 67. "Before I was afflicted, "I went aſtray; but now I have kept thy word." Afflictions are uſed by God, as thorns by huſband-men, to ſtop the gaps and keep you from breaking out of God's way, Hoſ. ii. 6. "I will "hedge up her way with thorns, and build a wall, that ſhe ſhall "not find her paths." A double alluſion; 1. To cattle that are apt to ſtray, *I will hedge up thy way with thorns.* 2. To the ſea, which is apt to overflow the country, *I will build a wall to prevent inundations.* Holy Baſil was a long time ſorely afflicted with an inveterate head-ach, he often prayed for the removal of it; at laſt God removed it, but in the room of it, he was ſorely exerciſed with the motions and temptations of luſt; which, when he per-

Digitized by Google

ceived, he heartily desired his head-ach again, to prevent a worse evil. You little know the ends and uses of many of your afflictions. Are you exercised with bodily weakness? it is a mercy you are so; and if these pains and infirmities were removed, these clogs taken off, you may with Basil, wish for them again, to prevent worse evils. Are you poor? why, with that poverty God hath clogged your pride. Are you reproached? with these reproaches God hath clogged your ambition. Corruptions are prevented by your afflictions. And, is not this a marvellous help to holiness of life?

Secondly, By your afflictions, your corruptions are not only clogged, but purged. By these God dries up and consumes that spring of sin that defiles your lives, Isa. xxvii. 9. "By this therefore "shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged; and this is all the fruit "to take away sin." God orders your wants to kill your wantonness; and makes your poverty poison to your pride. They are God's physic, to purge ill humours out of your souls. * "When "they fall by the sword, and by famine, and by captivity, and "by spoil, it is to try them, and to purge them, and to make "them white?" They are both purges and lavatories to your souls. Others have the same afflictions that you have, but they do not work on them as on you; they are to you as fire for purging, and water for cleansing; and yet, shall not your lives be clean? It is true, (as one well observe upon that place of Daniel,) Christ is the only lavatory, and his blood the only fountain to wash away sin: but, in the virtue and efficacy of that blood, sanctified afflictions are cleansers and purgers too.

A cross without a Christ never made any man better, but with Christ, saints are much the better for the cross. Hath God been (as it were) so many days and nights a whitening you, and yet is not the hue of your conversation altered? Hath he put you so many times into the furnace, and yet is not the dross separated? The more afflictions you have been under, the more assistance you have had for this life of holiness.

Thirdly, By all your troubles, God hath been weaning you from the world, the lusts, loves, and pleasures of it; and drawing out your souls to a more excellent life and state than this. He makes your sorrows in this life, give a lustre to the glory of the next. Whoever hath, be sure you shall have no rest here; and all, that you may long more ardently for that to come. He often makes you groan, "being burdened, to be clothed with your house from "heaven," 2 Cor. v. 4. And yet will you not be weaned from lusts, customs, and evils of it? O what manner of persons should you be for heavenly and holy conversations? You stand upon the

* Dan. xi. 33, 34, 35.

Digitized by Google

higher ground. You have, as it were, the wind and tide with you. None are assisted for this life as you are, Put all this together, and see what this second argument contributes towards your further conviction, and persuation to holy life. Have you received a supernatural principle, fitting you for, and inclining you to holy actions, resisting and holding you back from sin? Hath God also set before you such eminent patterns to encourage and quicken you in your way? Doth the Spirit himself stand ready, so many ways, to assist and help you in all difficulties, and hath God hedged up the way of sin with the thorns of affliction, to prevent your wandering, and yet will you turn aside? Will you offer violence to your own principles and new nature? Refuse to follow such leaders as have beaten the way before you? Resist, or neglect his gracious assistance of the blessed Spirit, which he offers you in every need, and venture upon sin, though God hath hedged up your way with afflictions? O, how can you do such great wickedness, and sin against such grace as this!

Methinks, I need say no more to convince you how much you are concerned to keep the issues of life pure, none being so much obliged to it, or assisted for it as you are. But when I remember that Joash lost the complete victory over the Syrians, because he smote not his arrows often enough upon the ground, 2 Kings xiii. 8. I shall level one arrow more at this mark: For, indeed, that can never be enough pressed, which can never be enough practised. And therefore,

Consid. 3. *Thirdly*, It will yet farther appear to be your high concernment, to exalt holiness in your conversations, because of the manifold and great uses which God hath to make of the visible holiness and purity of your lives, both in this world and that to come. The uses God puts the conversation-holiness of his people in this world unto, are these, among others,

First, To win over souls to Christ, and bring them in love with religion. Practical holiness is a very lovely, attractive, and obliging thing. If the heathen could call moral virtue *verticordia*, *turn-heart*, from that obliging and winning power it exerciseth upon the hearts of men; if they could say of it, that were it visible to human eyes, all men would adore it, and fall in love with it; how much rather may we say so of true holiness, made visible in the lives of saints! This is the *turn-heart* indeed. It makes the souls of men to cling and cleave to the persons in whom it is; as it is prophesied, Zech. viii. 23. of the Jews, when they shall be called, (which shall be a time of great holiness,) "in that day, ten men "out of all languages of the nations shall take hold of the skirt "of him that is a Jew, saying, we will go with you, for we have "heard that God is with you." So much of God as appears in

Digitized by Google

men, so much drawing excellency there is in them. And this is the apostle's argument, 1 John i. 3. "That ye may have fellow-"ship with us." Why, what is there in your fellowship to invite men to you? "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with "his Son Christ Jesus." Who can choose but to covet their company, that keep company every day with God? Great is the efficacy of visible holiness to work upon the hearts of men; either as a *concause*, working in fellowship with the word, or as a single instrument, working solitarily without the word.

Where God is pleased to afford the word unto men, there the practical holiness of saints is of singular use, to assist and help it in its operation upon the hearts of men. When the lives of *Christians* sensibly exhibit that to the eyes of *men*, which the gospel doth to their ears; when so we preach, and so ye believe and live; when we draw by our doctrines, and you draw with us by your examples; when we hold forth the word of life doctrinally, and you hold it forth practically, as Phil. ii. 16. Where is the heart that can stand before us? O! when the plain and powerful *gospel* pierces the ears of men, and at the same time, the visible holiness of professors shines so full in their faces, that they must rather put out their own eyes, or else be forced to acknowledge, that God is in you of a truth; then it will work to purpose upon souls. Then will Christ see of the travail of his soul daily.

Yea, if God deny the word to men, yet this practical holiness I am speaking of, may be to them an ordinance for conversion. This way, souls *may be won to Christ without the word*, as the apostle speaks, 1 Pet. iii. 1. Though pulpits should be silent, and vision fail; yet, if you would this way turn preachers, if your lives may but preach the reality, excellency, and sweetness of Jesus Christ and his ways; and, if you would this way preach down the love of the world, and let men see what poor vanities these are; and preach up the necessity and beauty of holiness; surely you, even you, might be honoured to bring many souls to Christ, to turn many to righteousness, and cause many to bless God, on your behalf, in the day of visitation. This is the use God hath for the holiness and purity of your lives, and doth not this engage you strongly to it? What, not when it may prove the means of eternal life to others? Surely, if you have any bowels of mercy in you, you cannot hide from others that whereby they may be saved. How can you, instead of holding forth the *word of life*, (which is your manifest duty) visibly hold forth the *works of death* before men? Have you been beholden to others, and shall none be beholden to you for help towards heaven? Dare you say, let others shift as well as they can, find the way to heaven by themselves if they can, they shall have no benefit by your light? If you be

Digitized by Google

Chriſtians, you are Chriſtians of a different ſtamp and ſpirit from all thoſe we find deſcribed in ſcripture. Should not you rather ſay as the lepers did, 2 Kings vii. 6. "Do we well to hold our peace," whilſt others are periſhing? Shall the *lips of miniſters*, and the *lives* of *Chriſtians*, be both ſilenced together? Shall poor ſinners neither hear any thing from us, nor ſee any thing from you, that may help them to Chriſt? The Lord have mercy then upon the poor world, and pity it, for its caſe is deſperate. O put on, as the elect of God, bowels of mercy. Deſtroy not, by the looſeneſs of your converſation, ſo many ſouls; for your ſcandalous miſcarriages are like a bag of poiſon put into the ſpring which ſupplies the whole city with water.

Secondly, Another uſe God hath for it, is to recover and ſalve the credit of religion, which by the apoſtaſies of hypocrites, and ſcandalous falls of careleſs Chriſtians, is wounded, and expoſed to contempt. Much reproach by this means is brought upon religion, and how ſhall that reproach be rolled away, but by your ſtrictneſs and purity? By this the world muſt be convinced that all are not ſo. Though ſome be a blot to the name of Chriſt, yet others are his glory. The more others ſlur and diſgrace religion, the more God expects you to honour and adorn it. I remember Chryſoſtom brings in the perſecutors ſpeaking to two renowned martyrs, after this manner, *Nonne videtis alios veſtri ordinis hoc feciſſe?* i. e. Why are you ſo nice and ſcrupulous? See you not that others of your rank and profeſſion have done theſe things? To which they returned this brave anſwer, *Nos hac potiſſimum ratione viriliter ſtabimus*, i. e. have they done it? For that very reaſon we will ſtand out like men, and will never yield to it. There is an holy *Antiperiſtaſis* in the zeal of a Chriſtian, which makes it, like fire, burn moſt vehemently in the coldeſt weather. If men make void God's law, therefore will David love his commandments above gold, Pſal. cxix. 127. If there be many Pendletons among profeſſors who will betray Chriſt and his truth to ſave their fleſh; God will have ſome Sanders to repair that breach, by their conſtancy and courage in appearing for them.

Thirdly, God makes uſe of it for the *encouragement of his miniſters who labour among you.* And indeed it is of no ſmall uſe to refreſh their hearts, and ſtrengthen their hands in their painful work: "Now we live (ſaith the apoſtle) if we ſtand faſt in the Lord," 1 Theſſ. iii. 8. He ſpeaks as if their very life lay at the mercy of the people, becauſe ſo much of the joy and comfort of it is wrapt up in their regularity and ſtedfaſtneſs. God knows what a hard providence his poor miniſters have, and how many diſcouragements attend them in their work; hear how one * of them expreſ-

* Lockyer upon the Coloſſians, p. 528, 529.

Digitized by Google

ſes it, "Miniſters would not be gray-headed ſo ſoon, nor die ſo "faſt, notwithſtanding their great labours, if they were but ſuc-"ceſsful; but this cuts to the heart, and makes us bleed in ſecret, "that though we do much, yet it comes to nothing. Our work "dies, therefore we die. Not ſo much that we labour, as that "we labour in vain: When our miniſtry petrifies, turns hearts "into ſtones, and theſe taken up and thrown at us, this kills us; "the recoiling of our pains kills us. When our peace returns to "us; when we ſpend our ſtrength to make men more nought "than they were; this wounds our hearts, which ſhould be con-"ſidered by ſinners. To kill one's ſelf, and one's miniſter too, "who would ſave them; what a bloody condition is this! "* Every drop that hath fallen from our heart and hand, from "our eye-lids and eye-brows, ſhall be all gathered up, and put "as marginal notes by all our labours, and all put in one volume "together, and this volume put into your hands at the great "day, and opened leaf after leaf, and read diſtinctly and exactly "to you."

Chriſtians, you hear our caſe, you ſee our work. Now a little to cheer our ſpirits in the midſt of our hard and killing labours, God ſends us to you for a little refreſhment, that, by beholding your holy and heavenly converſation, your cheerful obedience, and ſweet agreement in the ways of God, we may be comforted over all theſe troubles, 2 Theſ. i. 3, 4. And will you wound and kill our hearts too? O what a cut will this be!

Fourthly, God hath further uſe for the holineſs of your lives; this ſerves to daunt the hearts, and overawe the conſciencies of his and your enemies. And ſometimes it hath had a ſtrange influence and effect upon them. There is a great deal of awful Majeſty in holineſs, and when it ſhines upon the conſcience of a wicked man, it makes him ſtoop and do obeiſance to it, which turns to a teſtimony for Chriſt and his ways before the world. Thus Herod was over-awed by the ſtrict and holy life of John; he feared him, knowing that he was a juſt and holy man, and obſerved (or preſerved and ſaved) him.

That bloody tyrant was convinced in his conſcience of the worth and excellency of that ſervant of God, and was forced to reverence him for his holineſs. So Darius, Dan. vi. 14, 18, 19, 20. What conflicts had he with himſelf about Daniel, whom he had condemned; his conſcience condemned him, for condemning ſo holy and righteous a perſon. "Then the king went to his palace, and paſt the "night in faſtings; neither were inſtruments of muſic brought "before him, and his ſleep went from him. He goes early in

* Lockyer upon the Coloſſians, p. 551.

Digitized by Google

" the morning to the den, and cries with a lamentable voice, O " Daniel, ſervant of the living God." How much is this for the honour of holineſs, that it conquers the very perſecutors of it; and makes them ſtoop to the meaneſt ſervant of God! It is ſaid of Henry II. of France, that he was ſo daunted by the heavenly majeſty of a poor taylor that was burnt before him, that he went home ſad, and vowed, that he would never be preſent at the death of ſuch men any more. When Valence the emperor came in perſon to apprehend Baſil, he ſaw ſuch majeſty in his very countenance, that he reeled at the very ſight of him; and had fallen backward to the ground, had not his ſervants ſtept in to ſupport him. O holineſs, holineſs, thou art a conqueror. So much, O Chriſtians, as you ſhew of it in your lives, ſo much you preſerve your intereſt in the conſciences of your enemies: caſt off this, and they deſpiſe you preſently.

Fifthly, and laſtly, God will uſe the purity of your converſations *to judge and convince the world in the great day**. It is true, the world ſhall be judged by the goſpel, but your lives ſhall alſo be produced as a commentary upon it; and God will not only ſhew them by the word how they ought to have lived, but bring forth your lives and ways to ſtop their mouths, by ſhewing how others did live. And this I ſuppoſe is intended in that text, 1 Cor. vi. 2. " The ſaints ſhall judge the world, yea, we ſhall judge angels;" i. e. our examples are to condemn their lives and practices, as Noah, Heb. xi. 7. is ſaid to condemn the world by building the ark, i. e. his faith in the threatening, and obedience to the command, condemned their ſupineneſs, infidelity and diſobedience. They ſaw him every day about that work, diligently preparing for a deluge, and yet were not moved with the like fear that he was; this left them inexcuſable; ſo when God ſhall ſay in that day to the careleſs world, did you not ſee the care, and diligence, the holy zeal, watchfulneſs, and ſelf-denial of my people, who lived among you? How many times have they been watching and praying, when you have been drinking or ſleeping! Was it not eaſy to reflect when you ſaw their pains and diligence, Have not I a ſoul to look after as well as they; a heaven to win or loſe, as well as they? O how ſpeechleſs and inexcuſable will this render wicked men, yea, it ſhall not only be uſed to judge them, but angels alſo. How many ſhocks of temptations have poor ſaints ſtood; whereas they fell without a tempter? They ſtood not in their integrity,

* When therefore the faithful are ſaid to ſit in judgment with Chriſt, it muſt be underſtood, not of any authority and power of judging of themſelves, but, (1.) Of that which is given them in Chriſt their head. (2.) Of their approbation of the ſentence pronounced by Chriſt. *Apoc.* xix. 1. (3.) Of their bearing witneſs by their miniſtry or converſation (againſt the wicked) and the compariſon of their own lives with theirs, by which the juſtice of the Judge ſhall be manifeſt.

Digitized by Google

though created in such excellent natures; how much then are you concerned on this very account also to walk exactly! if not instead of judging them, you shall be condemned with them.

And thus you see what use your lives and actions shall be put to; and are these inconsiderable uses? Is the winning over souls to God a small matter? Is the salving the honour and reputation of godliness a small matter? Is the encouraging the hearts and strengthening the hands of God's poor ministers, amidst their spending, killing labours, a small matter? Is the awing of the consciences of your enemies, and judging them in the last day, a light thing? Which of these can you call so?

O then, since you are thus *obliged* to holiness of life, thus singularly *assisted* for it; and since there are such great dependencies upon it, and uses for it, both now and in the world to come, see that ye be holy in all manner of conversation. See that, "as ye "have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so ye walk in him;" always remembering, that, for this very end, Christ hath redeemed, or "delivered you out of the hands of your enemies, that you "might serve him without fear, in righteousness and holiness all "the days of your lives," Luke i. 74, 75. And to how little purpose will be all that I have preached, and you have heard, of Christ, if it be not converted into practical godliness? This is the scope and design of it all.

And now, reader, thou art come to the last leaf of this treatise of Christ, it will be but a little while, and thou shalt come to the last page or day of thy life; and thy last moment in that day. Wo to thee, wo and alas for ever, if an interest in this blessed Redeemer be then to get. The world affords not a sadder sight, than a poor Christless soul shivering upon the brink of eternity. To see the poor soul that now begins to awake out of its long dream, at its entrance into the world of realities, to shrink back into the body, and cry, *O, I cannot, I dare not die.* And then the tears run down. Lord, what will become of me? O what shall be my eternal lot? This, I say, is as sad a sight as the world affords. That this may not be thy case, reflect upon what thou hast read in these sermons. Judge thyself in the light of them. Obey the calls of the Spirit in them. Let not thy slight and formal spirit float upon the surface of these truths, like a feather upon the water; but get them deeply fixed upon thy spirit, by the Spirit of the Lord; turning them into life and power upon thee; and so animating the whole course and tenor of thy conversation by them, that it may proclaim to all that know thee, that thou art one who esteemest all to be but dross, that thou mayest win Christ.

End of the First Volume.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY
REFERENCE DEPARTMENT

This book is under no circumstances to be taken from the Building

Form 410

Digitized by Google